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THE MAGIC OF MADRID

By Daniel Kuziow

A beacon lit in Madrid and carrying with it the light of football's future has been passed on to the region Oceania to bask in its celebrated warmth and protection.

Last week, the isolated and often neglected football confederation of Oceania at last received belated recognition with the FIFA executive delegating the region automatic passage for the 2006 World Cup in Germany and beyond.

But Wednesday's decision must not be looked at as a way of celebrating and rewarding mediocrity. Rather the momentous decision is the result of intense lobbying that began some six months ago in May when Sepp Blatter was elected to the presidency of the governing body.

With an agenda of globalising the game to reach the far corners of the globe, Blatter proposed that each region should have equal recognition and representation on the world stage. In the time since, OFC president Basil Scarsella played a pivotal role in presenting his region as a worthy candidate for guaranteed entry.

FIFA's decision to award Oceania a

spot in the football spectacle is a sporting gift-the likes of which we have already seen when Sydney captured the



Basil Scarsella: OFC President played a large role in securing Oceania's automatic World Cup spot.

2000 Olympic games and when Australia successfully secured sole hosting rights for next year's Rugby World Cup. Lobbying has always been richly rewarded as the efforts of SOCOG and the ARU have gone to show. The OFC merely put forward a bid that 24 men saw as a worthy proposal and a request that these same 24 men saw right to satisfy.

In the wake of the decision, rival football codes have claimed it will do nothing to their supporter networks and their games will continue on in their evergreen style. Perhaps however they are forgetting that only this year, the World Cup semi final between Brazil and Turkey was televised at the series deciding Third State of Origin Rugby League match at the Olympic Stadium in Sydney. And already we have seen that soccer was the number one watched sport during the whole of 2002.

While the FIFA decision may not have immediate effects on these sports, football will now flourish more than ever in the global outpost of Oceania. Its development is now protected under the cover of the entire FIFA family and the magic of Madrid can now never be removed from the playing roots of its participants.

NEXT STOP: DUBAI



The Young Socceroos celebrate their passage to Dubai after defeating Fiji 15 nil on aggregate.

VALLANI LEAVES FORCE

By Allan Crisp

Ominous signs of growing unrest within the Adelaide City Force camp surfaced in dramatic fashion last Thursday night when NSL coach Charley Villani and his assistant Jan Kierno quit their positions.

D'Ottavi took over the coaching job for Sunday's game with Melbourne Knights, indicating a decision on a replacement would be made next week.

Villani, who last May became the ninth man to coach City since the inception of the NSL in 1977, told the players of his decision at a meeting in a central city café.

Villani then phoned City president Bob D'Ottavi, saying, "I just want you to know I am resigning."

"He (Villani) didn't give me a reason. The call lasted only a few seconds," D'Ottavi said.

The City players expressed disappointment and pledged their support for Villani.

Villani cautiously delayed explaining why he had quit, preferring to run a prepared statement past a legal eagle before releasing the document.

Villani then claimed he resigned because he lacked the full support of the board, also claiming that the board had interfered with his coaching duties.

"The board was actively participating in my decisions in a manner which I didn't believe was in the best interests of the team," Villani said.

D'Ottavi denied those accusations,

maintained he was making the key decisions, but believed he had been undermined by individuals within the club.

When appointed following the resignation of Zoran Matic, Villani chose Sam Miskelly as his NSL assistant.

But, four months into the season, Miskelly was dismissed after being told that decision was made as a cost cutting measure.

After Villani tendered his resignation, D'Ottavi admitted he had been "unhappy" with the team's results in losing four of its past five games.

"Yes, I was unhappy and Charley was unhappy and so were the fans, who wouldn't be," D'Ottavi, told Channel 10.

"We have to react to the fans," said D'Ottavi, who said he believed Villani's resignation stemmed from his inability to handle the pressure of coaching at NSL level.

Villani and D'Ottavi were agreed on one aspect of the drama reconciliation is out of the question.

after earlier shrugging aside persistent rumours of managerial interference with Villani's coaching methods and team selection.

Throughout the inquisitions, Villani



UNITED, SHARKS OWE SA NOTHING

By Mark Stavroulakis

Amidst claims last week made in ABSW that Sydney United and the Olympic Sharks owed Soccer Australia a combined debt of \$300,000 came the truth that both clubs knew nothing of this matter.

Both clubs were furious over accusations made that they were two of three worst clubs in the National League owing money to Soccer Australia.

Officials from both clubs contacted ABSW immediately stating the 'Real' facts about what they owed and their ill feeling towards the article that caused a lot of heated controversy last week.

Sydney United board member and ex-player Tony Krslovic was 'disgusted' about allegations made that his club owed a substantial fee to SA and also refuted the other claim that coach Branko Culina had taken a pay-cut.

"You really think Branko would take a pay-cut?",

stated Krslovic to ABSW.

Meanwhile Olympic Sharks CEO Peter Raskopoulos was also up in arms about the assumption that one of the best clubs in Australia owed SA money.

"I rang up Anter Isaac (Company Secretary of SA's Financial Department) and stated to him I might be missing something here but are we owing anything outstanding? Ante confirmed 'that we were up-to-date'."

The only thing that we have to pay up at the end of the month is the insurance of the players. I'd like to add three things regarding this issue though that: number one, we've always been up-to-date with our accounts, number two, the article written was fabrication of the truth and number three that I think is most disappointing, is where the majority of the article came from?

The article referred to South Melbourne being one of the few clubs that had followed Chairman Remo Nogarotto's view on either paying up any debts or face the loss of points, Raskopoulos however had his view on this issue.

"South Melbourne is a great club and always has been a great club run by some great presidents but unfortunately their spokesman who is representing them at the moment, I mean to state and throw stones at other clubs which included our club as well. Realistically they should be the last club to speak out at all, but then again I suppose some people just want to see their names printed in the paper under any circumstances."

One of Olympic Sharks' four owners Matthew Lepouris was also enraged about the accusations of money being owed to SA stating exclusively to ABSW that "The four owners of Olympic have done the right thing not only with Soccer Australia but with everybody which includes the fans, players etc. This was a serious accusation that was totally untrue."

ABSW wish to apologize to both Sydney United and the Olympic Sharks for any inconvenience it had caused through the article published in the weekly.

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Mark Bosnich faces disciplinary action from Chelsea and the Football Association after a B sample confirmed a positive test for cocaine.

Bosnich has been suspended since the first test returned a positive finding last month and the results of the second sample now open the way for the Chelsea goalkeeper to be charged by the FA.

The test result means proceedings by the FA and Chelsea against Bosnich can now go ahead.

The Australian international now faces a lengthy ban, though the FA can also order him to attend a course of rehabilitation and counselling.

Chelsea legend Ron Harris warned that Bosnich's top-level career could be over if a significant ban is imposed as he insisted there were too many "overpaid, spoilt footballers" in the game.

Harris told BBC London Live: "If he's found guilty, then his



Noel Spencer: Returning this week from trials at Motherwell.

career has most probably come to an end as he would be banned worldwide for over a year.

"For somebody that misses that long, it's going to be very difficult to get back into the swing of things. So I think his career is non-existent.

"It's like everything else — when you play with fire, you should expect to get burned. If he

has failed the test, then he has to suffer the consequences."

"Depression is when you can't afford to pay your mortgage. I'd like to be earning 40 grand a week and getting depressed," he added.

"Things have obviously changed over the years. These fellas can't afford to step out of line, they're like film stars, but I think a lot of them are overpaid, spoilt footballers."

Meanwhile Chelsea chairman Ken Bates has revealed that the club has not been in contact with Mark Bosnich since the keeper failed his drugs test.

★★★★

Things are certainly moving for the Northern Spirit during their prescribed absence from the NSL. Not only has Adam Kwasnik been called up for the Australian under 20's side but both Noel Spencer and Hamilton Thorpe have both been given trials overseas.

Norrköping have offered trials to Northern Spirit centre forward Hamilton Thorpe.

The former Portsmouth striker will join Canadian goalkeeper Pieter Meuleman in tests with the Swedish club ahead of January's transfer window.

Thorp signed for the Spirit at the start of this season and has managed seven games for Lawrie McKinna's team so far.



Hamilton Thorpe: Norrkoping have offered trials to the Northern Spirit striker.

Motherwell boss Terry Butcher will take a close look at Northern Spirit midfielder Noel Spencer this week. The former Australia U23 international has flown to Scotland for trials and is due back on Christmas Day.

Meanwhile Olympic Sharks midfielder Wayne Srhoj has just returned from trials overseas with Danish club FC Copenhagen and are awaiting to hear whether he has done enough to secure a contract.

★★★★

Blackburn's Lucas Neill will face a one-match ban after the club's attempts to overturn his sending-off at Everton failed.

The Australian defender will now sit out Rovers' Premiership

clash with West Ham at Ewood Park on Saturday, December 28 after referee Graham Barber dismissed him for two bookable offences at Goodison Park.

A Rovers spokesman said: "Although there is no formal procedure for appeal over dismissal for two bookable offences, we asked if the match referee would look again at the incidents which brought the bookings and reconsider his verdict.

"The dismissal has been upheld and Neill will serve suspension."

IMPORTANT NOTICE



THIS & NEXT WEEKS
ISSUE OF THE AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY WILL BE 24 PAGES INSTEAD OF THE NORMAL 32 PAGE SPREAD.

January 7th 2003 will see ABSW return to its normal 32 page spread giving readers the best and most extensive coverage on local and international football.

ABSW staff would like to wish its readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Australia's U/20 Assault

By Alan Clark

Australia humiliated Fiji eleven-nil in the first leg of the OFC Play-off in scorching conditions in Melbourne on Saturday, illustrating the enormous gulf in class between the OFC nations.

South Melbourne's Michael Baird, playing on his home ground, scored four, and his striking partner - Marconi's Alex Brosque - a pair, with the other five shared around. Wollongong's Dustin Wells, Southampton's Scott McDonald, Perth Glory's David Tarka, South Melbourne's Vince Lia, and Olympic Sharks' Franco Parisi each scored, showing the strength of Australia's footballing future, and the talent on view in the NSL.

"They're hidden secrets," said Australia coach Ange Postecoglou after the game. "Because of a lack of television coverage, people aren't seeing Alex Brosque, or Matty McKay, or

David Tarka, or any of these guys on a regular basis. I firmly believe these kids are as good as any we've produced in the past. They play NSL week-in, week-out (and) there's an opportunity (to see them), and if people don't, they're going to miss out seeing our future stars."

The Fijians scarcely had an opportunity to construct any positive move of its own, such was the constancy of the Australian pressure and the fluidity of their movement of the ball. They continued to repel the Australians, but were not able to retain possession once gained.

But when the Fijians fell to the siege it was in dramatic fashion, conceding three goals in as many minutes just before the quarter-hour, and another two in three minutes just before the half-hour.

Wells netted a 25 metre thunderbolt after a cross from the left then had only been partially cleared by the pressured Fijians. Baird scored two goals after he'd been played onto a through-ball on both occasions which completely

split the square Fijian back-line to face only the now punch-drunk Aisake Bonaveidogo in goal.

Once again the Fijians held out against constant pressure from the Australians until another mini-collapse. McDonald took full advantage of a Fijian headed clearance which went across the eighteen-yard line into his path and side-footed home a volley from sixteen-metres. Then Tarka bundled the ball over the line when a corner was swung in to the near-post, and Bonaveidogo managed to reach a sharp header from Spase Dilevski but gained no distance with his punch.

Brosque made it six, shortly after the re-start after a solo run from the half-way line during which time he comfortably fended-off three Fijian challenges before slotting a left-foot shot home from ten metres.

By this time, the gulf in class between the two sides was abundantly evident, and grist for those who criticise the award of full Confederation status to OFC, and the consequences for places in the various World Championships.

Postecoglou was having none of that, however. "All it says is that Australia deserves to be in the World Cup," he said. "We're producing world-class youngsters who deserve to be on the world stage. If we go to a World Cup, I guarantee you we won't be beaten eleven-nil."

Scheinflug was equally dismissive. "Let's not get carried away. Australia are the big boys at the moment. It took (Australia) thirty years to get to be big boys. We'll put everything into the next stage. We'll catch (Australia) up, and we'll pass them. If Australia's (representative) teams get complacent, they'll get punished."

The eventual score-line could have been even more one-sided as Baird and Valeri missed golden opportunities - one from Baird from barely four

metres when facing the full width of the goal.

Just on the hour mark, McDonald made way for Parisi, handing the arm-band to Tarka, and leaving the pitch to a rousing reception from the appreciative home crowd.

Lia came on as a substitute just after the hour and then buried a low strike past Bonaveidogo after a run down the right just five minutes later to make it seven.

The Fijian goalkeeper was often in the action; and pulled off a string of spectacular saves as he flew through the air to grasp the ball - none better than the one he held from Parisi's strong header seventy-minutes in.

Parisi had better fortune just six minutes later when he received a ball 25 metres out with his back to goal, controlled and turned in a single movement, then shot low past Bonaveidogo's left for Australia's eighth.

Baird brought up his hat-trick with a side-foot shot after a fine cross from the left from Brosque, and Brosque himself took the Australian tally into double digits when he converted a well-judged cross from the right from Lia.

Baird made it eleven, and a personal tally of four, with six minutes remaining. McKay's cross from the right completely cut out the by now threadbare and shell-shocked Fiji defence.

The pace of the game scarcely slowed despite it being played in the

heat of a Melbourne summer's day, and a forecast maximum temperature of 40 degrees. To have played later would have meant the teams would not have reached Fiji in time for the second leg scheduled just two days later on the following Monday.

Fiji and Australia stand on the same side of the International Date Line and the short period is actual, rather than virtual. After it was agreed to delay the original schedule which required Fiji to face Australia only two days after playing its last game in the Group B qualifiers, there was a tight travel itinerary requiring the first leg being played in mid-afternoon. Both teams needed to leave Australia on an international flight which departed at 7:00pm.

As it was, the forecast was varied and the game played in a lower temperature of just 36 degrees, despite which Australia managed comprehensively to out-pace the visitors and surely qualify for the Finals in Saudi Arabia.

"We'll give some of the other lads a run (in the second-leg)," said Postecoglou. "There are still boys there who are fighting for World Cup spots. It's just three months away. I'll be giving quite a few of the squad a run in the second game, and treat the second game just as seriously as the first."

Australia completed the second leg of the Oceania Football Confederation under-20 World Youth Championship qualifying final with a comfortable four-nil victory over Fiji.

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Oceania hasn't earned spot, says Warren

Former Socceroo captain Johnny Warren says he doesn't believe Oceania has earned its direct qualification to the World Cup finals.

But Warren, one of the most outspoken opponents of a direct World Cup finals passage for Oceania, was celebrating despite his belief Australian soccer would be better served by sacrificing its place to play more meaningful qualifiers in Asia.

"We have heard it all before from FIFA, and we've always been shafted in the past," said Warren, a member of the only Australian team to qualify for a World Cup finals in 1974.

"But finally (Sepp) Blatter has delivered and Basil (Scarsella) has delivered. It's fantastic for the game here - what a Christmas present!"

"Even though I don't agree with direct qualification because I don't think Oceania has earned it and I think there are more benefits in qualifying through Asia, we do have a huge opportunity now."

"But I would have preferred it if we'd earned our way through."

"I think it's a hollow way



Former Socceroo Johnny Warren believes Oceania did not deserve direct qualification.

to get there. There won't be too much dancing in the streets if we beat Fiji."

Warren had advocated Oceania giving up its World Cup finals place to the Asian confederation, then trying to qualify as part of the much stronger Asian group.

He said Australia would almost certainly qualify as one of the strongest Asian nations, as well as providing regular matches against top-class opposition and better sponsorship opportunities for the game.

Oceania's cash boost

Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) president Basil Scarsella believes FIFA's decision to award the Oceania qualifier a direct route to the 2006 World Cup will inject between \$10-\$20million into the successful country's coffers.

From Madrid via a telephone hook-up, Scarsella said: "My personal view is that qualification is worth \$10-\$20million."

"That is made up not just from direct allocation of funds from FIFA but commercial benefits also. Although that is my view and is quite conservative."

However, Scarsella was keen for the game to flourish across the region as a whole.

"The top priority is to capitalise on the decision and ensure that all 11 countries of Oceania benefit," he said before he revealed his model for Oceania's future qualification tournament.

"Subject to approval from the Oceania executive my view is that qualification would be over 12 months or more. I envisage the six top teams in Oceania would play home and away, similar to Asia or South America."

"That will benefit more countries and I think the fact that Oceania has a regular spot at the World Cup will ensure better quality teams coming to this part of the world."

And it looks like this will continue to happen in the foreseeable future.

"The vision is that this is an indefinite decision. I don't expect Oceania to lose its spot after 2006," Scarsella added.

"This is recognition that Oceania as a confederation has matured, the development of the game is happening at a pace that is satisfactory for FIFA and has been rewarded with a full spot. One place for Oceania will be a permanent spot."

This should encourage Australia's often-absent stars to make themselves available for all World Cup qualifiers be

they against traditional rivals New Zealand or Fiji and Vanuatu.

Scarsella said: "FIFA has rules that enable Soccer Australia to impose their will on players to come back and represent their country seven times a year where there is absolutely no excuse. But if you are looking for an excuse not to play for your country then I don't think you should be playing at all."

As for the trouble that may be caused for the national team or club sides by players being called away from their overseas clubs to represent Australia, Scarsella had a special message for Socceroos coach Frank Farina.

"Whatever friction it might cause I think we will manage it at the time."

"I mean Frank Farina was advocating for the scrapping of Oceania not long ago so I'm sure he's not worried about it now. Whatever decision Oceania makes I suggest Farina sticks by it and focuses on coaching the team and not the politics."

"There is an international calendar in place so certainly from our perspective qualifying games will be scheduled with that in mind to make it easier for all countries to have all players available."

The former Soccer Australia chairman painted a picture of unity amongst FIFA's six confederations as he explained the process that ultimately handed Oceania the right to have a representative at Germany 2006.

And he rejected claims that the South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL) did not support Oceania's bid for a spot.

"There were a lot of informal discussions about what was likely to happen and how it should be handled. But regarding South America complaining that is absolutely not correct," Scarsella stated.

"Support for Oceania's direct qualification was virtually unanimous, across all confederations. And South America to



OFC President Basil Scarsella played an instrumental role in Oceania gaining direct qualification towards the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

their credit were very supportive."

With all six confederations consenting to Oceania's bid for a World Cup berth a vote of the executive committee was not needed.

Scarsella explained: "The confederation presidents met, with (FIFA president) Sepp Blatter and he expressed support for Oceania to have direct qualification."

"I clearly did the same and all other confederations had the view that if Oceania are to be treated as a full confederation they should have representation to the World Cup."

Scarsella's relationship with FIFA president Blatter has been quite well documented and surely had a bearing on the favourable outcome for Oceania, but he

was quick to point out that the ground work had been done long before he took over as OFC boss.

"We supported Blatter because he has been a big supporter of developing soccer countries and we have been very fortunate in terms of getting significant support from FIFA."

"If we backed loser back in June (for the FIFA presidency) clearly today's decision would have been much more difficult but we backed him because he has supported us over a four year period."

"While I was lucky enough to be on the spot to bring direct qualification to Oceania I think a lot of the work has been done by my predecessors, especially Charlie Dempsey. I think he would be more delighted than anybody to see us get direct qualification."

With Oceania and North and Central America (CONCACAF) gaining an extra half spot for the World Cup, Scarsella pointed out that Blatter's vision for a more global game continues to prosper.

"Under Blatter's administration, FIFA's focus has been on globalising the game. This is a reflection that the development of football globally is working and as a result there always needs to be a readjustment."

"And it clearly needs to happen from the established countries to the developing countries and that's what happened in relation with CONMEBOL and UEFA losing half a spot for the benefit of CONCACAF and OCEANIA."

Scarsella admitted that Soccer Australia's instability was spoken about among FIFA's powerbrokers but in the end was a non-issue.

"I stressed that the problems were more at a political level than at a grass roots level. The development of the game continues and while it was an issue in the end I don't think it had too much of an impact."

Nogarotto: We must make it work

Soccer Australia chairman Remo Nogarotto believes that it is now up to Australian soccer to make the most of the opportunity for development presented by direct qualification to the World Cup finals.

Speaking after the FIFA decision to award a berth in the final 32 to the champion of the Oceania region, Nogarotto warned that the likelihood of making it to the finals for just the



Soccer Australia chairman Remo Nogarotto

second time would not automatically cure all that is wrong with the sport in this country.

"I think it would be very wrong for anyone to see this as the complete panacea to all the ills afflicting the game," Nogarotto said.

"What it does do, however, is give us an opportunity, and if we fail on this occasion to capitalise on the biggest opportunity ever presented to the game then we ought to all collectively hang our heads in shame."

"We need to be out there with an appropriate business plan to make sure that on this occasion we deliver

and we actually match the rhetoric that we haven't delivered in the past," he added.

Nogarotto praised Oceania Football Confederation president Basil Scarsella for his pivotal role in lobbying for the FIFA decision.

"I think a lot of the credit should go to Basil Scarsella who has developed a relationship with (FIFA president Sepp) Blatter in particular, but more broadly within FIFA, which has allowed our arguments for direct qualification to finally resonate amongst the people that matter," Nogarotto said.

He said it was not possible to estimate what the decision might be worth to soccer in Australia.

"It's difficult to quantify exactly what it will mean, commercially, to the game, but you'd have to say that the result of this decision is a product and a game that will be viewed dramatically differently by potential corporate sponsors than that which has applied in the past."

"On the balance of probabilities, we should progress through to 2006 and the World Cup finals, and that makes it a very different commercial proposition for any potential partner."

"But I think we need to bear in mind that the dollars don't start flowing in from tomorrow morning. There's still a lot of work that needs to be done in terms of positioning this organization correctly in the marketplace in order to be able to leverage off the opportunity that has been presented to us."

Soccer Australia chairman Remo Nogarotto.

Farina ready to qualify

Socceroos coach Frank Farina says he's delighted with FIFA's decision to grant the top team from Oceania a guaranteed berth into the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany.

"I'm over the moon, to be honest. I think for the game itself throughout the region it's fantastic," Farina said.

"As a soccer fan and soccer lover, who's lived the past 20 years of trying to qualify for the World Cup, I think this is great for the game."

"I think it will have a huge impact on all levels, from grass roots all the way through to National League."

"I think we'll see kids with heroes to aspire to. If they're seeing a team from Oceania going to the World Cup and playing against the best teams in the world, that's going to give these kids something to aspire to. You hope you'll be able to keep a lot more in the game at the age of 15 or 16 because they've got something to look to achieve."

Farina warned against overconfidence, saying it would be wrong to think that Australia will emerge as Oceania's representative.

"All you have to do is look at the last team that qualified for the World Cup from this region - and that's New Zealand. They will always be a threat and you can rest assured that they will be doing everything in their power to make themselves a strong unit coming into World Cup qualifications."

Farina says he isn't concerned about how the qualification process takes place within the region, with a home-and-away group stage being suggested as a likely alternative to a knockout tournament.

"That may be the case, but that's OK. The most important thing is that Oceania does have a berth in the

World Cup, and as far as the logistics of qualification whatever comes forward we just have to grin and bear it and get on with it."

"We will accept whatever decision Oceania comes down with. Obviously we, as a member of Oceania, would more than likely be involved in the discussion about the format, but we'll



Socceroo coach Frank Farina.

just accept it and move on."

Asked whether he thought some overseas clubs, such as those in the English Premier League, might still be reluctant to release players, Farina said he expected FIFA's rules to be enforced.

"We're battling for a spot in the World Cup and if they don't like it, that's just bad luck. Whatever players I select I expect to be there."

The Socceroos coach also indicated that he already has some thoughts on the sort of international fixtures he

would like to play in the lead-up to qualification.

"The program that we've currently got in place will have to be re-jigged, because at least now we know exactly what our qualifying path is and if it goes down to a group of six with ten qualifying matches, that would come into it as well," Farina explained.

"But we've got certain ideas on different events and different games that

would tie in with whatever qualifying path Oceania put forward."

He added that it would be important for Australia to field its best players throughout the qualification process.

"That's the beauty of going into a group phase and if that's what's put forward then all those things have to be taken into account, goals and making sure you get full points."



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0418 411 196

Canberra Soccer fast becoming a joke

Local soccer promoter Chris Tanner lashed out at the behaviour of many of Canberra's soccer officials, following the antics at Monday night's Soccer Canberra AGM.

"There is only a handful of people in this town who know what it takes to take the game forward. I pity poor Walter Valeri with the job he has ahead of him," said Tanner.

"How can a soccer association the size of your average Sydney local league, incur debts the size of Soccer Canberra? There are people earning money for doing what grandmothers do as volunteers on kitchen tables in Sydney. There are claims that the poor financial results are due to a lack of sponsorship. What about the Kanga Cup? Isn't that supposed to be Australia's biggest junior tournament? Who is responsible for bringing in the sponsorship dollar?"

"There are a number of delegates who thanked me for informing other state presidents of what was happening in Canberra prior to the Soccer Australia AGM. One delegate then had a shot at

me, using confidential information which somehow got out of the Soccer Canberra office. The man is a loud-mouth hypocrite."

"The development system here needs a complete overhaul, as does the management structure, not to mention character checks on a number of officials. I



Chris Tanner: Zenith Player agent has lashed out on the behaviour of many of Canberra's soccer officials.

applaud Walter (Valeri) for his commitment to transparency, and have offered him my support. I am told, he may want

to look at Soccer Canberra's travel arrangements in recent years."

"The whole issue was clouded when the outgoing president, decided to air his concerns about FIFA agents being involved with clubs. He, of all people should have known that agents have arrangements with clubs all over the world. He's a former player manager himself, though I am not sure if he was licensed at the time."

"I believe the meeting may have been confused over the actual FIFA regulations, but they have nothing to do with the shabby treatment given to Canberra Royals anyway."

Tanner was alerted prior to the AGM, that one Soccer Canberra employee was "electioneering" while on the payroll. "I am investigating this matter, as is a number of candidates for board positions."

"We then have local coaches slammed for bringing the highly successful Coerver program to the ACT. It's ludicrous. There are too many people feathering their own nests in Canberra soccer, and the game here is going backward."

Schwarzer: Good & Bad

Socceroo keeper Mark Schwarzer has hailed Oceania's historic direct entry to the World Cup from 2006, but admits some disappointment as well.

The Middlesbrough custodian was delighted that Australia's chances of reaching its first World Cup since 1974 have received the massive boost following the FIFA executive committee's vote in Madrid on Tuesday.

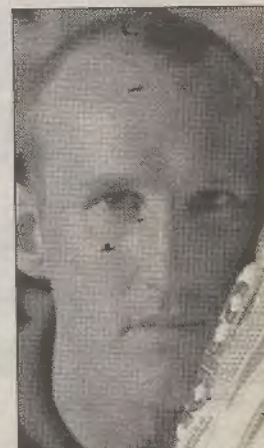
But at the same time Schwarzer says the fact that the Socceroos no longer have to endure cut-throat qualification ties against South American or Asian

opponents is also a little disappointing.

"It's great news for Australia and of course the players," Schwarzer told PA. "It's tinged with a little bit of disappointment in that we never actually qualified through the original qualifying process."

"It would have been nice to prove that we could do it that way, but the fact that Oceania have got automatic qualification is fantastic, and it's well deserved."

"Football in Australia has come on in leaps and bounds in recent years, and we deserve this prize - and it's in Germany, which is fantastic



Socceroo keeper Mark Schwarzer for myself," added Schwarzer, whose parents are both German-born.

Player Agents welcome FIFA decision

The ALPAA today welcomed the news of Oceania's direct qualification into the 2006 FIFA World Cup with great joy on behalf of Australia's soccer players.

Association president Lou Sticca, echoed the views of all player agents and their clients when he congratulated FIFA on their commitment to soccer in our region.

"Many players in the National Leagues and regional leagues throughout Oceania, tell their agents of the frustrations that forces them to want to move overseas."

With Oceania now awarded a seat at the table with other FIFA confederations, we are

confident that media and corporate support will flow back toward the game in a positive

way," said Sticca.

The hundreds of players we represent, and our member player agents, now hope that industry growth and development will follow, and allow the world game to flourish on the South Pacific stage," he added.

There is no doubt that countries like Vanuatu, Fiji, New Caledonia and others have also welcomed the decision, while Australia and New Zealand, the traditional powerhouses of the region, are jointly celebrating as well.

Sticca said, "the inclusion of the Kingz in the NSL, and now this monumental FIFA decision, augurs well for Oceania football, and the industry in general"



ALPAA President Lou Sticca: Delighted about Oceania gaining direct qualification towards the 2006 World Cup.

FACT NOT FICTION ON HINDMARSH STADIUM ISSUE

By Allan Crisp

"Adelaide City Forces decision to move its remaining home games to Norwood Oval may be the death knell for soccer at Hindmarsh Stadium."

So screamed the lead paragraph in an item aired on the "Soccer News South Australia" web site and repeated in ABSW's December 17 edition.

The article went on to say that the "\$40m soccer facility is lying dormant and that the SA Government is investigating its options for the future of Hindmarsh Stadium.

These include selling or leasing the ground to another sport."

In the interests of separating fact from fiction, lets bring the issue up to date. Agreed, a final City decision to vacate Hindmarsh would be a serious setback to soccer in this State.

However, at Press time, the SA Government is currently having talks with Adelaide City to present the available options to them.

"There still is a chance we can reach agreement for Adelaide City to play its

remaining NSL games at Hindmarsh," stadium manager Peter Lang told ABSW.

As for selling or leasing the facility to another sport, the SA Rugby League (as reported in ABSW, December 10) HAS relocated its offices from Ram Park, Oakden to previously unoccupied office accommodation at Hindmarsh Stadium.



at this stage with Adelaide City away to Melbourne Knights last Sunday and with City having the bye this week. Also the lack of a sponsor to support the proposed Summer Night Series originally scheduled for Hindmarsh meant that the tournament has been switched to the Blue Eagles headquarters at Marden Sports Complex.

Does all this mean the death knell for soccer at Hindmarsh Stadium as suggested by "Soccer News South Australia?"

Not exactly, because the SASF has a protection agreement with the stadium management that it can use the facility on 30 occasions during each season. And, that figure does not include NSL matches.

Those are the facts, not fictional fantasy. The other decisive elements will revolve around the discussions between the Force and the stadium management, with the bottom line being - will the SASF be able to afford to stage its allocated quota of matches?

Traditionally, nice things happen around Christmas. Oceania gained direct World Cup qualification did it not?

The SARL has signed a lease contract with Hindmarsh Stadium management and has already booked the stadium for a school rugby carnival and for its local grand final.

SARL general manager Bob Hucker assured Lang his league would continue its efforts to entice interstate rugby league teams to play in Adelaide.

Granted the stadium is lying dormant

Socceroos v England SOLD OUT

Tickets for the much-anticipated England v Australia friendly on February 12 have sold out in a flash after going on sale in London.

The English Football Association said on its website that the 3000 tickets available for the special Australian supporters section at West Ham's Upton Park ground were snapped up in "less than the time it takes to watch an episode of Neighbours." That's half an hour if you aren't familiar with the famous Australian soap.

The rest of the tickets were sold out in the next few hours as fans choked the ticket hotline hoping to get a seat.

The match will be sixth England-Australia encounter but first to take place in England.



What a battle it will be - David Beckham and Harry Kewell will be at it in the Socceroos and England clash.

NSW's Soccer Blueprint

THE NSW government is hoping to steal an edge on its federal counterpart - at least in the soccer stakes - by delivering recommendations on the future of the game in NSW.

NSW Premier Bob Carr released his government's blueprint today, at least four months ahead of the Australian Sports Commission's national review of the sport.



NSW Premier Bob Carr

Among the 11 separate recommendations is to set up the NSW Football High Performance Institute - a soccer school of excellence to be located at Homebush Bay.

The government said it has also recommended a football foundation, a technical director for NSW Football as well as schools of excellence and business for the sport.



NZ SLAM OZ ARROGANCE

New Zealand Soccer chief executive Bill MacGowan has labelled Australia's belief that they are almost guaranteed a place in the World Cup finals as "absolutely arrogant".

Following FIFA's decision to grant the Oceania Football Confederation champions a direct route to Germany 2006, the Socceroos are in

the box seat to make their first foray on to the world's biggest sporting stage since 1974 - ironically also in Germany.

However, MacGowan told the New Zealand Herald: "Our biggest challenge is to not allow it to become an Australian charity and New

Zealand needs to be planning for that."



The NZ Soccer boss labelled the reaction from across the Tasman - following Oceania's greatest triumph - as "typical Australian".

With Australia ranked 50th in FIFA's year end

world rankings and the All Whites one spot ahead in 49th, the battle for Oceania supremacy may not be as clear cut as many believe.

Although MacGowan did admit: "But in saying it is arrogant, if you look at their top side when they put it on the park, they are a world class outfit."

AUSSIE DREAM

Australian soccer has been reeling from a shortfall in cash in recent months, but that is all about to change.

FIFA officially handed football Down Under a lifeline after virtually decades of neglect.

The game's world governing body announced at their executive meeting in Madrid that the Oceania winners will automatically qualify for Germany 2006. And that means no more marathon trips to countries like Argentina, Iran and Uruguay, where the Socceroos have had

continued: "The decision will be felt at all levels and in all of the member national associations in the OFC.

"Everyone stands to benefit and the game can only grow further. Direct entry means the game will progress on both commercial and competitive fronts.

"In terms of development in our region, the thought of the World Cup being just one step away will be huge motivation for the island nations."

Scarsella, knowing that this decision had as much to do with politics than football, added: "We are also thankful to Mr

Blatter, the FIFA executive and all those who supported Oceania's case during the lead up to this meeting."

FIFA's decision will pour money into the game's coffers, giving Soccer Australia a secure financial launchpad for their World Cup dreams.

"We absolutely deserve it, not just Down Under, but in the whole region of

Oceania," Australia coach Frank Farina said.

"The (FIFA) slogan is 'For the Good of the Game.'"

It is certainly for the good of the game in Australia, where the sport is underfunded. Their inability to beat the South Americans earlier this year proved a financial disaster for Soccer Australia.

It cost the association approximately \$A12million, guaranteed had they qualified for the Far East tournament. After that failure, Soccer Australia fell apart at the seams.

The president, chairman, a director and chief executive all resigned, not just because of money, but also due to a belief the organisation was not prepared to adopt reforms they deemed necessary for the sake of the game. Australia's absence in the Far East tournament did not stop the Aussies from watching on television in record numbers.

Now all soccer officials should have

plenty of focus and sponsors should be lining up soon to back the Socceroos like never before. Australia goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer, who plays for Premiership side Middlesbrough, said: "It's great news for Australia and of course for the players.

"It's tinged with a little bit of disappointment in that we never actually qualified through the original qualifying process.

"It would have been nice to prove that we could do it that way, but the fact that we have automatic qualification is fantastic and is well deserved.

"Football in Australia has come on leaps and bounds in recent years and we deserve this prize."

Oceania was given full status four years ago, but remained the only confederation not to have at least one automatic place in the World Cup finals. Six regional confederations voted to grant Oceania the full berth for the first time and FIFA ratified the decision.

Oceania and CONCACAF received an extra half berth than they had for Korea Japan 2002 while UEFA and CONMEBOL relinquished half a spot to make up the difference.

So the 'Land of Oz', a country deemed to be the best all-round sporting nation in the world, finally gets the chance to prove themselves in the world's most popular game.

Their cricketers are far and away the best, in another galaxy even; the Wallabies are world champions of rugby at both codes; Adelaide's current favourite son, Lleyton Hewitt, is tennis' best player; and Ian Thorpe is the undisputed king of swimming.

Now they hope to take on the world's best in the beautiful game.

Allocation of places for Germany 2006

Africa (CAF) - 5

Asia (AFC) - 4.5 (play-offs against CONCACAF)

Europe (UEFA) - 14 (inc. hosts GER)

North, central America Caribbean (CONCACAF) - 3.5 (playoffs against AFC)

Oceania (OFC) - 1 South America (CONMEBOL) - 4

NORTHERN SPIRIT'S INTERNATIONAL SIDE

By Mark Stavroulakis

It's been no secret that National League side Northern Spirit have gained the headlines of late for producing five players toward international sides.

The current Young Socceroos (U20) boost four Spirit youngsters in Jonathon Richter, Matthew Osman, Alex Wilkinson and the late inclusion of Adam Kwasnik while Brent Fisher represented New Zealand's U20 side who were ousted by a tough Fijian outfit only recently.

Due to international commitments with their respective countries, under SA law, if more than 3 players are chosen to represent

their country, then that team is allowed to postpone future matches.

This offer was taken up by coach Lawrie McKinna who held nothing but praise for his young chargers that delighted the club with their international inclusions.

"It's a great feeling as a coach seeing the boys progress to the next level. I feel as though the boys have been through a great deal since they've started this year but they've done quite well.

Having young Matthew Osman coming from no where - he's been involved in a few of our matches this year and has played numerous positions and has done very well.

Alex Wilkinson was given his debut at the start of the year and you wouldn't believe he was an 18-year-old kid, you'd think he's been playing the game at top level for a long time.

Young Jonathon Richter (a live-wire player) has also proved his worth coming from the Australian Institute of Sport - he's been a breath of fresh air.

As for Adam Kwasnik, he has had a real good season for us and although he's only scored one goal this year, his been performing well for the past 6-7 weeks and he really deserves to be in the U20 squad.

Finally Brent Fisher the Kiwi lad has also done great, unfortunately he was injured against Perth but has trained the house down and will no doubt be a player to watch out for."

The Spirit have postponed three matches (R12 clash with Marconi,

R13 clash with the Parramatta Power and R15 clash with the Football Kingz) but have busily been training for this week's match against the Strikers in Sydney.



Adam Kwasnik: Spirit's young striker was called up last minute for the Young Socceroos in their battle against Fiji for a World Cup birth in Dubai next year.

"The boys have been working rather hard these past few weeks with fitness, weights and speed training along with some trial matches against NSW Super League clubs. It's good that we have established a great relationship with the NSWIS in Narrabeen where the lads have been using their training facilities.

We feel as though every game that we've played so far we've finished the stronger team in the second half so we are looking to build on having a stronger first half performance."



Lawrie McKinna: Northern Spirit coach happy about his young stars progress towards the international scene.



Can the Socceroos qualify for the next World Cup? Only time will tell.

to trek for away legs in intercontinental play-offs where they came off second best each time.

Barring an upset against New Zealand - ranked one spot below the Aussies in FIFA's world rankings - who beat an understrength Socceroos team in the recent Oceania Nations Cup to qualify for the Confederations Cup, Australia will play in the World Cup finals for the first time since 1974.

OFC president Basil Scarsella - a member of FIFA's 24-man executive - said in a statement released by the OFC: "We can now honestly say that the game is truly global as the World Cup will now be represented by all the Confederations.

"Oceania already has access to other FIFA tournaments and earlier this year we were granted direct entry to the 2004 Olympic Games so in light of these progressive developments, the decision was inevitable."

The former Soccer Australia chairman

OLYMPIC SHARKS vs MELBOURNE KNIGHTS



SUNDAY 29TH DECEMBER 2002
at TOYOTA PARK



Main Game Kick-Off 6.00pm • Exhibition Match 4pm

Gates Open 4.00pm

Corporate boxes will be opened at 4.30pm

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Gary Phillips
(Manager)



Andrew Packer



Ante Juric



Nick Sabljak



Steve Horvat



Andrew Marth
(Player/Manager)

The Olympic Sharks, proudly Sponsored by the Bank of Cyprus.



National League Round 12 Reports



Melbourne Knights

4



Adelaide City Force

3

By Alan Clark

Melbourne Knights put an end to a December horror-stretch with a hard-fought win in a seven-goal thriller against Adelaide City Force at Knights Stadium on Sunday evening.

Force had taken a two-goal lead through Aurelio Vidmar and Nick Budin before drew level at the break with goals from Leon Buhic and player-coach Andrew Marth.

Adelaide City re-took the lead in the second-half with a goal from Shane Smeltz, but saw the lead evaporate again after the hapless Iain Fyfe conceded an own-goal. Knights gained the lead and never surrendered it after a sparkling solo goal from Anthony Pelikan with twenty minutes remaining.

Both teams ended the match a player down after Adelaide City's Michael Valkanis and Knights' Rodrigo Vargas each drew double

yellow in separate incidents late in the game.

With results elsewhere falling as they did, Knights cemented a position in the top six, even though its recent form has seen just this one win in its four December outings. "We had discussions during the week (as) things weren't going that well," said Marth. "We changed out style of play to play more direct, and it seemed to work for us."

Despite the loss, Adelaide City owner and stand-in coach Bob D'Ottavi was upbeat. "It was a good open game of football," he said. Force had lost its coach Charley Villani during the week who resigned his position after a string of poor results, and D'Ottavi had been required to step in.

"It could have gone either way. When we went up two-nil we got took it too casual for the next ten minutes," D'Ottavi said.

D'Ottavi dismissed speculation

that ex-Knights' coach Vlado Vanis who was at the match had been interviewed for Force's coaching vacancy. "His name hasn't come up (and) we haven't



Melbourne Knights' Croatian import Leon Buhic shown taking on the Force during last week's epic encounter that went player/manager Andrew Marth's way, four-three.

spoken to him," he said.

Vidmar opened the scoring just before the first-half's mid-point after a balanced opening period. He benefited from a quick break after Isyan Erdogan and Leon Buhic contrived to turn the ball over when Knights itself was in a promising position up the left.

Carl Veart took advantage of the Knights' duo crowding each

other's space and stole away with the ball, playing it across to Vidmar in an inside-left position after an unchallenged run. Vidmar controlled, feinted to shoot with his left, leaving Marth wrong-footed, then turned inside onto his right, curling the ball into the net at the far post with Martin John hopelessly exposed.

Force doubled the lead within ten minutes when Goran Lozanovski ghosted in at the far post and cut back a ball that had floated over and been given up by the Knights' defence. Lozanovski met it on the stretch and directed it to Budin who gleefully hit home from six metres.

But what had taken Adelaide City almost half-an-hour to achieve was undone by Knights in eight minutes. Buhic outpaced a square Adelaide City back-line onto a through-ball from Pelikan and netted with a strike from 14 metres, retrieving the ball himself to enable a quick re-start.

Adelaide City restored its lead just before the hour after a defensive mix-up involving Marth and Vargas inside their own penalty-area failing to clear the ball. It ricocheted to Smeltz who faced only Johns and scored easily.

An own-goal conceded at the near-post by the unfortunate Fyfe from a cross played in from the right brought the Knights level again within five minutes,

and then Pelikan gave the lead to the Knights for the first time in the match following a scintillating run which took him past three ineffective City challenges.

Valkanis then drew his second card for an NFL-style block on Pelikan, leaving City a player short for the remaining quarter-hour.

Unsurprisingly, Knights had the better of the rest of the game with Gustavo Biscayazacu hitting the bar, but the player balance was restored with five minutes remaining after Vargas drew his second caution for deliberate hand-ball just ten minutes after his first.

"Roddy made a wise decision there," said Marth. "I'd rather go in with three points (and a player cautioned) rather than just one. He wasn't the last man, but (Adelaide City) had numbers on us, and they scored (in similar circumstances before). So I'm not disappointed in his red card."



Brisbane Strikers

1



Perth Glory

1

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane Strikers have a lot of work ahead in the New Year if they are to make the finals after a hard fought 1-all draw with Perth Glory at Ballymore last Saturday night.

The Strikers are walking a tight rope to make the finals with just 12 points this season and need to double that tally in the second round to fulfill coach John Kosmina's ambitions.

Kosmina believes the Strikers can make the finals with 36 points with eight wins from its remaining 12 matches but was again lamenting missed opportunities against Perth.

Kosmina believes he'll have a better guide on his side's faint finals hopes after the next two matches, both away, to Northern Spirit and Wollongong.

"We'll need to win both," Kosmina said.

The Strikers, last season's finalists, are paying dearly for an early season form slump which requires them to now play catch up with the other clubs.

However, the Strikers appear to be on the right track after stretching their unbeaten run to four games against Perth, who looked a more polished and sharper outfit than the Strikers.

The Strikers started poorly against Perth, who remain second behind pacesetters Sydney Olympic, with its defence looking shaky against the fearsome front duo of Damian Mori and Bobby Despotovski.

Despotovski played a starring

role for the visitors and grabbed the opportunity given by coach Mich D'Avray for a regular starting spot.

Despotovski, 31, who made a late Socceroos debut in the Confederations Cup qualifiers in July, gave Perth a 16th minute lead with a simple tap in after Mori unselfishly laid off in front of goal.

Despotovski has struggled to maintain a regular starting position with Perth this season scoring only one goal prior to the Strikers' clash.

The Strikers' early concession came from a horrible mistake in centre field from Jon McKain who



Glory's Bobby Despotovski notched in his side's only goal in their one-all against the Brisbane Strikers.

swung wildly at an attempted volley mistiming his pass into the path of Mori who broke clear of the flat footed home defence.

D'Avray has used Despotovski sparingly this season completing one full game in the Glory's loss to South Melbourne in October although he did start against Adelaide City on December 1.

Perth made all the running in the first half but the Strikers fought back after the break to level in the 63rd minute from lanky striker Anthony Roche. ¶

Roche notched up his fifth goal in ten games in his first national league season driving home after an earlier shot from Brazilian Fernando Rech rebounded off Perth keeper Jason Petkovic. ¶

Neither side had many scoring opportunities in the opening period with the Strikers' best falling for youngster Josh Rose and Rech while defender Adam Webber had a 30-metre shot brilliantly saved by the outstretched left hand of Petkovic. ¶

Despotovski went close to leaving Ballymore a hero blasting a thundering volley into the waiting arms of keeper Jason Kearton in the 69th minute.

Then three minutes from time he sent a searching ball forward from centre field to Gary Faria who flung himself to the ground with a diving header which sailed just wide of the upright. ¶

Perth's draw partly erased the

memory of one its most disappointing results of the season when the Strikers caused a major upset downing last season's grand finalists 4-3 in the first round. ¶

The Perth Oval loss last September ended Glory's 12 match unbeaten home run at the time. The Strikers are yet to beat Perth in seven appearances in Brisbane with Glory winning four and drawing the remainder. ¶



Newcastle United

4



Sydney United

1

By Pano Tagaroulis

An average crowd of 5056 was on hand to witness yet another solid home performance by Newcastle United. The game was marred by crowd disturbances throughout the night causing an unscheduled break in play on 55 minutes.

A group of volatile Sydney United fans saw fit to launch more than a dozen flares onto the pitch and into the crowd after their side conceded a third goal.

For the home team Mark Wilson received his first start this season, replacing the injured midfield general Milan Blagojevic. Sydney United were looking to move back into top six contention after losing their last two games without scoring a goal.

On 13 Adam Griffiths, headed clearance found Esala Masi in opposition territory. The Fijian international headed the ball onto Joel Griffiths who was pushed in the box by a desperate Mark Rudan. Joel Griffiths took advantage of the situation in order to earn his side the penalty, with Rudan receiving a yellow card for the rash challenge. The pacy striker converted from the spot with an audacious chip into the middle of the net over Sydney.

United custodian Vanja Ivesa. Branko Culina later commented about the refereeing saying, "The decision was iffy at best, very iffy."

Sydney United's chances were few and far between as David Barrett was forced to shoot from distance on 25 minutes. The NSL veteran's long range effort was fired a metre wide of the left-hand upright.

In the first minute of stoppage time Joel Griffiths displayed deter-

mination to keep the ball in play on the byline. When the speedy striker attempted to cut into the box he was tripped by Barrett just inside the area, winning the Novocastrians their second penalty. Sydney United custodian Ivesa hesitated in fear of a repeat of the first penalty as Griffiths, effort rebounded off the right post and into the net giving his side a 2-0 lead.

In the 53rd minute Mark Wilson won a midfield challenge and played a ball up the park to Joel Griffiths. The potent striker picked out Masi with a defence splitting pass and the Fijian international slotted the ball into the net for a 3-0 lead.

A minute later Louis Brain blasted a shot over the bar, sparking an ugly crowd reaction by the Sydney United supporters. The match was held up for a few minutes while flares were thrown onto the pitch by the volatile fans.

Seconds later a one-two involving United's strikeforce resulted in a blocked shot by Joel Griffiths

after his run into the Sydney United penalty area.

In the 78th minute Brendon Santalab had the ball on the byline with his back to goal when he was unnecessarily shoved by a scrambling Beltrame. Referee Ben Williams awarded the third penalty of the night to Sydney United for Beltrame's overzealous challenge. Santalab converted the spotkick to claw the score back to 3-1.

Four minutes into injury time Joel Griffiths broke forward from just inside his own half and played a low ball into the box for Middleby. The pacy midfielder had no trouble slotting the ball into the net for 4-1, capping off a fine counter-attacking move.

Sydney United coach Branko Culina felt that his side was hard done by in the first penalty incident saying, "The referee definitely played a part in the first goal," however he also stated, "In the end Newcastle deserved to win."

Ian Crook was pleased with the result and the performance saying, "Once we scored we kicked on tonight."

Joel Griffiths and Mark Wilson were the stand-out performers for the home side while Ante Daur and Louis Brain looked dangerous at times for Sydney United.



Joel Griffiths bagged a double from the spot-kick for Newcastle to put his tally to ten goals for the season.



National League Round 12 Reports


Parramatta Power
1

Wollongong Wolves
0
By Peter Damalas

A solitary goal by Brad Maloney was enough for Parramatta to claim three points on Sunday evening at Parramatta Stadium. A severely depleted Wollongong Wolves side battled hard for a share of the points, but were undone eleven minutes into the second half.

The dismissal of Parramatta utility, Ray Younis opened the contest for the away team, as Wollongong pressed home the numerical advantage. The win places the Power a point out of the top six, and equal with Adelaide City and Sydney United.

Both Nick Theodorakopoulos and Ron Corry had major selection dilemmas as they dealt with the absence of key players due to injury and suspension. The Wolves played with sixteen year old Jacob Timpano at right wing back, and gave an NSL debut to former Maltese under 21 international, Matthew Galea.

With striker Naum Sekulovski injured, and debut Sean Babic and midfielder Dino Mennillo also unavailable, the Wollongong outfit seemed content to play out a scoreless draw, their specialty this

season.

While Parramatta have also had problems this year, with the loss of Lubo Lapsansky, Pablo Cardozo and Nick Orlic, they began the brighter of the two teams.

Kosta Salapasis forced 'keeper Andrew Crews into a save with a shot in a crowded penalty area after five minutes. Brad Maloney went close on nine minutes as he challenged for a cross from the left, which was diverted for a corner.

Parramatta were attacking at every opportunity and found penetration with the likes of Ahmad Elrich and Younis. The interesting encounter between Elrich and left-back Shane Lyons never eventuated as Elrich moved into the centre, where he was far more dangerous.

While Wollongong's championship winning teams of 2000 and 2001 played a high tempo attacking game, this season's edition rely more on sturdy play through the midfield and numbers in defence.

In a rare foray upfield, Stuart Young had a far post header cleared for a corner after a cross by David Huxley. The Wolves captain skied a free kick from a central position in the 28th minute.

After a warm afternoon which offered

brief periods of rain, the brisk wind assisted the away team, who were supported by a group of vocal fans who travelled to Sydney for the match.

In the 36th minute, Brendan Renaud was flagged offside before he had the ball



Power custodian Liam Reddy kept his team in the game with some brilliant shot-stopping that prevented the Wolves from scoring.

in the back of the net, and Maloney attempted to chip the 'keeper after Crews had to head the ball clear from the edge of the penalty area.

Parramatta defender Jack Sobczyk was the saviour early in the second half as he made a timely challenge in a moment of promise for the away team, who had numbers in attack.

But Wollongong were lucky to escape only a minute later when a low cross from the left whizzed across the face of goal and beyond reach.

Power forward Kosta Salapasis displayed strength and composure as he threaded a ball through to Maloney, who chipped Andrew Crews and scored a well taken goal. The former Socceroo's 2nd goal in successive Parramatta games was richly deserved and forced a valiant Wollongong to search for an equaliser.

After a week off due to the deferred match with Northern Spirit, the Power looked fresh and enterprising. Speedster Ahmad Elrich often went behind the dour Wolves backline, and was pulled down by Robert Stanton, who was booked.

Looking to kill off the resistance, Maloney drilled the free kick low at the 'keeper.

However, Parramatta were reduced to 10 men following the sending off of Ray Younis on 61 minutes. After a foul by stopper Dean Heffernan, Younis reacted and head-butted his opponent, leaving referee Craig Zetter with no option but to



Power's Brad Maloney was man of the match in his side's one-nil win over the Wolves.

brandish the red card.

From this moment, Ron Corry sensed an opportunity to claim a draw, and introduced Tallan Martin up front. The diminutive striker first miscued a cross which fell invitingly for him, and forced Liam Reddy into an excellent reaction save with two minutes remaining.

Despite a frantic final minute of stoppage time, in which Wollongong had two corners and a free kick, Parramatta dealt comfortably with the loss of a player.

In the battle between two teams stretched to the limits of personnel and depth, the match always looked destined to be settled by a single goal.


Marconi Stallions
0

Olympic Sharks
3
By Joe Russo

How Marconi must have wished a former junior, Inter Milan and Italian star Christian Vieri, could have taken the field for them. Vieri, one of the world's best strikers and a guest at the game, witnessed Olympic Sharks steamroll Marconi Stallions at Marconi Stadium on Friday night.

Olympic coach Gary Phillips can justifiably feel very proud of his team as they are clearly the best NSL side at the moment. Six straight victories are testament to that.

Furthermore, Ante Milicic was rested for the game yet he didn't seem to be missed at all by his teammates. It only goes to show what the team is capable of at the moment.

On the other hand Marconi coach Raul Blanco must be pulling his hair out. It has been a terrible season so far for the Stallions and their lack of fire-power up front is of real concern.

However, there does seem to be relief in sight for the Marconi goal drought. Alex Brosque will return next week against Wollongong after he finishes his commitments with

the Young Socceroos and Joe Spiteri has only three more weeks or so to go with his injury.

Spiteri and Brosque are the

two players that have scored the majority of goals for the Stallions who have now gone five games without scoring.

Just like they did at Toyota



Troy Halpin slides in vain against Stallions defender Paul Cotte during last week's derby match that ended in Olympic's favour three-nil.

Park Cronulla earlier in the season Olympic beat Marconi by the same three-nil score-line. It is a true reflection of the difference between the two teams at the moment.

Once again it was Hiroyuki Ishida who scored a spectacular goal. It was the 29th minute and Ishida from out of nothing turned and shot. Marconi keeper Michael Turnbull couldn't do anything as the ball finished in the back of the net. Up until that point it was a rather even game but from then Olympic showed their class.

In the 43rd minute lack of judgement by Grant Last saw referee, Angelo Nardi, brandish the red card. Last was late with a sliding tackle on Ishida and Marconi were left with only ten players and they were pushing water up hill for the rest of the game.

It was a rather spiteful game with eight yellow cards, six of which to Marconi, and one red. Clearly the Stallions are frustrated at their on field performances which are manifested in their lack of discipline.

It was in the 60th minute that Jeromy Harris scored again for Olympic. He received a nice ball from Greg Owens and rounded the keeper Turnbull to score.

Marconi then tried replacing players to add some spark to their attack but it was to no avail. Olympic were the better



Sharks defender Ante Juric attempts to tackle Stallions star Angelo Costanzo for the ball.

side in the second half and it was Harris who again scored for Olympic in the 77th minute.

A nice Paul Kohler cross was headed by Harris and Turnbull managed to save but unfortunately the ball fell

straight back into the path of Harris who headed again. This time he made no mistake and it was Olympic's third goal. The match was well and truly over by then as the players went through the motions until the final whistle.



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SUNSHINE COAST STILL SHOW THE WAY

By Paul Schiavo

The final round of fixtures in the Super Summer League prior to the Christmas break saw leaders Sunshine Coast and Qld Lions facing tough matches.

Qld Lions faced a rejuvenated Sun's outfit in Lismore knowing that it would be an extremely difficult task after the Sun's last victory at home against the in-form Gold Coast side.

The Sunshine Coast on the other hand hosted the Gold Coast at their Maroochydore headquarters. Both sides recorded convincing victories last round and both sides knew that a victory was imperative - for the Gold Coast to keep them in touch with the leaders whilst for the Sunshine Coast a victory would confirm their place on top of the standings with only three rounds remaining.

The round's other fixture saw Rochdale Rovers making the journey to face Toowoomba eager for a victory against the hosts, after last week's narrow loss to the Lions.

A reminder to all supporters that fixtures will recommence on Saturday January 11.

FAR NORTH COAST SUNS 0
QLD LIONS HT (0-2) 2

The North Coast Suns were denied a third straight home win by a well-drilled Qld Lions side on Saturday night in Round 7 of the Qld Super Summer League.

The Lions sit in second place on the SSL ladder but it was the Suns who began the stronger and could have been first to score when Jed Wright forced a one on one with Lion's keeper Griffin McMaster. McMaster spread himself well to smother Wright's shot and went on to have an outstanding game, denying the Suns on numerous occasions.

While the Suns worked hard to create opportunities, their touch in front of goals let them down. In contrast young Lion's striker Danny Flaskas, who gave problems to the Suns in their first round encounter, again had a major impact on the game scoring twice in ten minutes to turn the match.

His first goal came in the 30th minute when a shot that could only be parried by Sun's keeper Richard Marshall, allowed Flaskas to scramble the ball over the line on his follow through.

Ten minutes later he struck again when a high ball was miss-judged by Marshall and another defender allowing Flaskas to run through unopposed and tap the ball into a vacant net.

HALF TIME

Far North Coast Suns 0 v Qld Lions 2

The Suns continued to create chances during a tight second half but a combination of wayward shots and some brilliant saves by McMaster saw the scoreline remain unchanged at the final whistle.

Best players for the Suns were their Man of the Match Aaron Richter-Steers who enjoyed the move from sweeper to midfield, Jed Wright, until a back injury forced him off at half time, solid sweeper Jamie Austin and striker Jordy Campbell who came on shortly after half time and worried the Lion's defense.

"The game summed up our season in a nut-shell", said assistant coach Jim Holmes.

"We started well and created plenty of chances but it was the other side that again scored first and that seemed to sap our confidence," he said.

"It was a quite even contest," said Qld Lions Director of coaching John Sime.

"Both teams battled well and I was especially pleased with the contribution of our younger players", said Sime.

"Saying that however, both Danny Flaskas and Damien Volkens, two of our more experienced players, continued the fine form that they've showed over the past three weeks".

"It took us nearly 50 minutes to come to terms with the park and during that time the Sun's took the game right up to us. We have to adapt a little quicker when we play on surfaces that aren't the same as home. In the end however the little bit of class was the telling factor in our victory."

"I was also impressed with their midfield especially Jed Wright and his substitution at half time proved a real difference."

(Thanks to Mark Robinson for his match report)

SUNSHINE COAST 3
GOLD COAST 1

The next round of fixtures in the Qld Super Summer League will be played on

TOOWOOMBA RAIDERS 1
ROCHEDALE ROVERS 3

With seven players out, this was always going to be a good test for the depth of our squad. A trip to Toowoomba is always a difficult assignment. With two defeats on the trot, it was important for us to get back to winning ways.

The first half was all one way traffic. We started with a very attacking formation despite leaving Mark Cruse on the bench. Our biggest problem is still giving the ball away, and hopefully over time we will realise this. With Grant Marshall dominating the middle of the park we were never really troubled but it was still a test to see who could find the net in Cruse's absence.

On about the 30-minute mark we were rewarded. A set piece free kick was delivered from the right and somehow our Japanese striker Kohei managed to control the ball on his back and volley home. A few minutes later David Freeman had the ball in the net again only for it to be ruled out by some strange decision.

With a couple of minutes remaining in the first half two things happened. Firstly Anthony Limbrick raced clear in a one on one but instead of placing his shot past the keeper he went for power and missed the target. We then had a moment of madness when twice in the space of a minute we nearly conceded with silly defensive mistakes. Luckily we held out and went to the break 1-0 up.

We introduced Mark Cruse and Chris O Connor at half time to consolidate. Low and behold within 10 minutes Toowoomba turned the tables and equalised. A very sloppy goal to concede.

The second half was a sloppy display. Toowoomba came out and tried to play and on occasions caused us problems. Trying to be fair to all the players we made

QLD SUPER SUMMER LEAGUE NEXT WEEK FIXTURES

DRAW FOR ROUND 11

ALL GAMES KICK OFF AT 7PM

**SUNSHINE COAST v
TOOWOOMBA
GOLD COAST v QLD LIONS
SOCCER FAR NORTH COAST
SUNS v ROCHEDALE ROVERS**

our last two substitutions, Tasdivar and Hastings came on for Jewitt and Cipollone. Immediately Hastings was in the action putting in three quality crosses that we failed to capitalise on. With time running out we made a tactical switch to our formation. With 5 minutes to go it paid dividends with Kohei scoring with a neat finish to get his second of the game. Freeman added a third in injury time to blow the score out a little.

To be fair, we battled hard yet again. We missed some easy chances and we defended quite well. Fortune favours the brave and on this occasion it was true. The only negative were the bookings for dissent, but all in all a nice win before the Christmas break.

MATILDAS TO FACE SWEDEN, MEXICO AND SOUTH KOREA IN AUSTRALIA CUP

Soccer Australia is pleased to announce the Australian Women's National Team, the Matildas, will face Sweden, Mexico, and South Korea in the 5th Australia Cup to be held 26 January to 1 February 2003.

The tournament provides vital top class competition in a big year ahead which includes the Oceania Women's World Cup Qualifiers (in April) and the FIFA Women's World Cup in China (September/October).

The Australia Cup is an annual event, and the 2003 edition marks the first time since 2000 that it has featured four nations.

AIS/National Women's Coach Adrian Santrac is delighted to be competing at home against such a diverse group of top women's football nations.

"The three countries coming all have distinctly different styles of play, and being able to adapt and combat those differences will be an important part of our overall preparations," said Santrac.

"This is our final tournament preparation before the World Cup Qualifiers, and it promises to be a fantastic event. The players are very excited about the quality of opposition participating and are looking forward to the challenge in front of them."

The Matildas have competed in the last two Women's World Cups and the 2000

Olympic Games, and are more eager than ever to maintain that record of competing at the very top.

Sweden is one of the elite few which has competed at every senior FIFA women's event to date (three Women's World Cups and two Olympic

Games), and has certainly been a leading light in the game since women's football has been recognised on a global scale.

The Swedes placed third in the 1991 Women's World Cup, and hosted the 1995 event. Sweden qualified for next year's World Cup by finishing as one of the top four nations at the European Championships earlier this year. The Swedes competed in the 2000 Australia Cup, finishing second behind the USA.

Mexico, with the majority of their players based in neighbouring superpower USA, has blossomed on the world stage over the last four years, culminating in their participation in the 1999 Women's World Cup.

Mexico is currently in the midst of their campaign to qualify for their second World Cup. As the third placed team in the recent CONCACAF Gold Cup which also served as the North, and Central America and Caribbean regional qualifiers, they will next year play off against Asia's third team for the coveted last berth to China 2003.

South Korea could well be that third team of Asia to play off against Mexico. South Korea is an emerging nation with a committed target of making China 2003 its first ever FIFA women's event. South Korea competed in the last Australia Cup, defeated by the Matildas in the three-test series.

The Matildas have won three of the four previous Australia Cup crowns, victorious in 1999 against Italy and Canada, 2001 over France, and 2002 against South Korea.

QUEENSLAND SUPER SUMMER LEAGUE

Results & Table - Round 7

Far North Coast Suns 0 **Qld Lions 2**
Sunshien Coast 2 **Gold Coast 1**
Toowoomba Raiders 1 **Rochdale Rovers 3**

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunshine Coast Hawks	7	6	0	1	16	6	18
Queensland Lions	7	5	0	2	18	7	15
Gold Coast City	7	4	2	1	19	11	14
Rochdale Rovers	7	2	1	4	10	14	7
North Coast Suns	7	2	0	4	9	16	6
Toowoomba Raiders	7	0	1	5	4	20	1



NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

After Round 14

	TOTAL							PTS	HOME							AWAY						
	P	W	D	L	BYE	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A	
OLYMPIC SHARKS	13	10	2	1	1	30	14	32	6	6	0	0	12	1		7	4	2	1	18	13	
PERTH GLORY	13	9	1	3	1	25	12	28	6	5	0	1	13	5		7	4	1	2	12	7	
NEWCASTLE UNITED	13	6	2	5	1	23	14	20	7	5	2	0	18	5		6	1	0	5	5	9	
SOUTH MELBOURNE	12	6	2	4	2	21	18	20	7	6	1	0	18	7		5	0	1	4	3	11	
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	13	4	5	4	1	24	28	17	8	4	2	2	16	17		5	0	3	2	8	10	
FOOTBALL KINGZ	12	4	4	4	1	17	14	16	6	2	3	1	8	6		6	2	1	3	9	8	
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	13	4	4	5	1	14	16	16	5	2	3	0	3	1		8	2	1	5	11	15	
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	13	4	3	6	1	21	21	15	6	2	3	1	11	8		7	2	0	5	10	13	
PARRAMATTA POWER	12	4	3	5	1	15	15	15	7	3	1	3	10	10		5	1	2	2	5	5	
SYDNEY UNITED	13	4	3	6	1	13	20	15	6	4	1	1	9	6		7	0	2	5	4	14	
BRISBANE STRIKERS	13	3	3	7	1	21	29	12	7	1	1	5	8	18		6	2	2	2	13	13	
NORTHERN SPIRIT	10	3	2	5	1	14	23	11	5	2	0	3	9	13		5	1	2	2	5	10	
MARCONI STALLIONS	12	2	2	8	1	12	18	8	5	1	1	3	5	10		7	1	1	5	4	11	

MARCONI STALLIONS

0

OLYMPIC SHARKS

3

(J Harris 60', 77', H Ishida 29')

Teams: MARCONI STALLIONS: Turnbull, Gibson, Webb, Costanzo, Longo, Perinich, Enes, Fitzsimmons (Bozicowski 66'), Last, Care (Anabalon 74'), Cotte, Subs Not Used: Thuwate, Alogdellis (gk).

OLYMPIC SHARKS: Bolton, Souris (Caravella 82'), Kohler, Junic, Halpin, Owens (Srhaj 77'), Harris (Pondeljak 83'), Porter, Packer, Durante, Ishida, Subs Not Used: Hughes (gk).

Cautions: S Webb (MS) 17', A Costanzo (MS) 57', D Longo (MS) 23', T Perinich (MS) 38', R Enes (MS) 61', P Cotte (MS) 87', P Kohler (OS) 87', T Halpin (OS) 15'.

Red Cards: G Last (MS) 43'.

Referee: Angelo Nardi. **Crowd:** 2920. **Venue:** Marconi Stadium.

NEWCASTLE UNITED

4

(J Griffiths 14' (pen), 47' (pen), E Masi 54', R Middleby 94')

SYDNEY UNITED

1

(B Santalab 77' (pen))

Referee: Ben Williams. **Crowd:** 5,076. **Venue:** Energy Australia Stadium.

Teams: NEWCASTLE UNITED: Beltrame, Thomas, Bingley, Wilson, J Griffiths, Tsekenis, Baillie, Masi, A Griffiths, Middleby, Eagleton (Dodd 78').

Subs Not Used: Zoricich, R Griffiths, O'Brien (gk).

SYDNEY UNITED: Ivesa, Cacic, Barrett, Lukac (Angelucci 67'), Jedinak, Brain, Menapi (Mendez 61'), B Santalab, Bosnar, Deur, Rudan (Bilokapic 55').

Subs Not Used:

Cautions: M Bingley (NU) 87', M Rudan (SU).

BRISBANE STRIKERS

1

(A Roche 63')

PERTH GLORY

1

(B Despotovski 15')

Referee: Con Diomis. **Crowd:** 2,283. **Venue:** Ballymore Stadium.

Teams: BRISBANE STRIKERS: Kearton, Stefanutto, McKain, McLaren, Grierson, Rech, Webber, Laybutt, Pilic (Alagich 72'), Rose (Drake 76'), Roche.

Subs Not Used: Carbone, Baldock (gk).

PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Harnwell, Hassell (Mrdja 68'), Gumprecht, Miller, Despotovski, Mouhouti, Junior, Mori (Horsely 90'), Faria, Pryce.

Subs Not Used: Coyne, Matassa (gk).

Cautions: B Despotovski (PG) 62', N Mrdja (PG) 76'.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

4

(I Fyfe (og) 64', A Marth 33', L Buhic 31', A Pelikan 70')

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE

3

(S Smeltz 57', A Vidmar 18', N Budin 24')

Referee: Eddie Lennie. **Crowd:** 3,340. **Venue:** Knights Stadium.

Teams: MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: John, Vargas, Kovacic, Marth, Vastlevski, Buhic (Biscayzacu 62'), Erdogan (Rocco 31'), Jolic, Cervinski (Fa Arodo 82'), Pelikan, Lapsansky.

Subs Not Used: Hrehoresin (gk).

Adelaide City Force: Scarsella, Fyfe, Kovacic, Valkanis, Pantelis, (Turnbridge 78'), Veart, Smeltz, Vidmar, Lozanovski, Terminello (Kemp 72'), Budin.

Subs Not Used: Godley (gk).

Cautions: R Vargas (MK) 76', A Kovacic (MK) 12', I Erdogan (MK) 27', G Biscayzacu (MK) 88', M Valkanis (ACF) 33', D Terminello (ACF) 15'.

Red Cards: R Vargas (MK) 85', M Valkanis (ACF) 74'.

PARRAMATTA POWER

1

(B Maloney 56')

WOLLONGONG WOLVES

0

Referee: Craig Zetter. **Crowd:** 2,413. **Venue:** Parramatta Stadium.

Teams: PARRAMATTA POWER: Reddy, Ceccoli, Beauchamp, Thompson (Langdon 83'), O'Sullivan, Maloney (Brownlie 93'), Salapaidis (Buonavoglia 74'), Younis, Sobczyk, Renaud, Elrich.

Subs Not Used: Vukovic (gk).

WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Crews, Timpano, Stanton, Cervinski (Martin 46'), Castro, Lyons, Young, Heffernan, Huxley, Galea, Aliffi.

Subs Not Used: Whalan (gk), Lockhart, Abel.

Cautions: R Stanton (WW) 60', S Lyons (WW) 66', D Heffernan (WW) 62'.

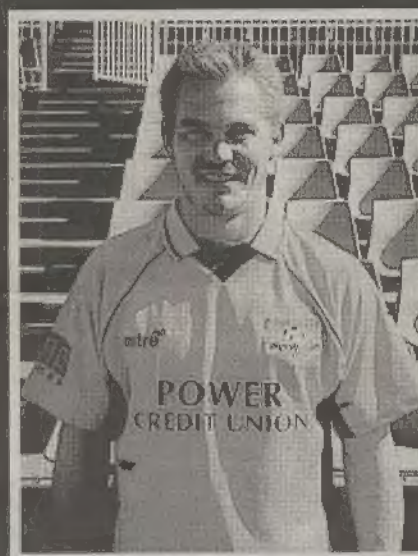
NORTHERN SPIRIT

V

FOOTBALL KINGZ

(Postponed)

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



Brad Maloney

(Parramatta Power)

Brad Maloney has been a revelation to the Parramatta Power squad after the powerful midfielder spent most of the season sidelined with an ankle injury.

Signed from Perth Glory this season, Maloney was expected to be one of the Power's main men this year.

Soon after the 30-year-old recovered from his injury, it didn't take long before Brad grabbed the headlines in Parramatta's three-nil win against Sydney United with Maloney scoring a goal.

Last week's match against the Wollongong Wolves, Maloney was at his best again grabbing rave reviews in a stunning individual performance to guide Nick T's side to glory with a one-nil win, and he was yet again on the scorer's list notching up the only goal of the game.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Total
MORI Damian	Perth Glory	12
GRIFFITHS Joel	Newcastle United	10
PELIKAN Anthony	Melbourne Knights	9
YOUNG Stuart	Wollongong Wolves	8
RECH Fernando	Brisbane Strikers	7
NGATA Heremaia	Football Kingz	6
ALMENDRA Patricio	Football Kingz	6
HASELL Bradley	Perth Glory	6

BYE - SOUTH MELBOURNE

From The Dressing Sheds

By Mark Stavroulakis

- What a brilliant week it was for soccer in this country after FIFA finally awarded Oceania direct qualification towards the next World Cup in Germany.

Finally something to smile and look forward to in the Australian game. It's come at a good time

BAD BOY OF THE WEEK



Grant Last
(Marconi Stallions)

Former U20 international Grant Last was chosen as ABSW's bad boy of the week for a crude tackle on Olympic Sharks' Japanese import Hiroyuki Ishida last Friday night at Marconi Stadium.

It could not have come at a worse moment for the Stallions as Last was given his marching orders a minute before half-time.

It was then one-way traffic as last year's Grand-Final winners ran riot of their rivals with the score-line ending in the Blues favour, three-nil.

The Stallions have now gone five matches without scoring a solitary goal and currently sit at the foot of the NSL table with eight points from twelve matches.

Marconi coach Raul Blanco will be hoping for a big result at WIN Stadium this week as the once glamour club from Fairfield take on Wollongong in a must win for the struggling side.

especially with all the happenings at Soccer Australia, with the World Cup dream to look forward to a stern message towards other sports in Australia is 'Watch out, the real football is coming'.

This World Cup spot will do many things for the game not only in Australia but Oceania as a whole.

Firstly, our Pacific

Island neighbours like Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Tonga, Tahiti and our Trans-Tasman rivals New Zealand will now look to strengthen their squads with a strong incentive - a World Cup birth.

Look to see the standard of these so-called easy beats to enhance, but the Socceroos must be

tough task for Australia.

Les Schienflug's Fijian side could also pose a threat for Farina's squad.

Let's hope that the big stars do make the trip when we do play our Oceania qualifiers. The likes of Kewell, Viduka, Skoko, Tiatto and co must make the trip - we have one chance to do this right and we need our full squad.

Having said that these two countries could pose a threat, if Australia gain their stars then I highly doubt Farina's squad will falter.

Our renowned Australian stars need to come 'down under', it's simply not fair if our National League stars get the call-up (like in previous years) to play these so-called easy-beats then come crunch time, no NSL player appears on the team sheet.

Secondly sponsors will surely be lured towards this spectacle, as the World Cup is the biggest and most watched sporting event in the world.

Big companies should surely be flocking soccer in Australia, especially if the side makes it to the 2006 World Cup.

And finally media coverage - we might even see increased coverage on non-soccer channels like Channel 10, 9 and our partners 7.

It's no secret that SBS has been soccer's saviour in showing the world game and if Australia qualify for the 2006 World Cup, they should be the front runners in claiming the TV rights.

Soccer currently stands as the number 4 or 5 sport in Australia, with a World Cup birth on our fingertips the sport could easily make the step up as being the best sport in Australia.

The rainy and hazy days of soccer in Australia could well be over; will this be the light at the end of the tunnel for the game in Australia? We'll just have to wait and see!

-One of the main men that led to Oceania gaining direct entry towards the World Cup was OFC President Basil Scarsella.

After the announcement Scarsella stated that a quarterfinals finishing for the Socceroos would repay FIFA's generosity in giving the Oceania region direct entry.

Socceroo skipper Paul Okon however stated that we should not think of the World Cup yet, and that qualification is the first step.

"It doesn't guarantee us a place at the World Cup, it gives us the best opportunity we've ever had. Let's not embarrass ourselves by not qualifying, which can happen."

-Talk has it that through Oceania gaining direct entry; \$10-20 million dollars is up for stake in prize money, sponsorship and endorsements.

This is the Christmas gift Soccer Australia has been waiting for, for a long time.

-Former Socceroo shot-stopper Mark Bosnich will be out of a medical clinic in time for Christmas, sources stated from English newspaper the 'Daily Mirror'.

After being alleged of testing positive to Cocaine, Bosnich checked into the 'Priority' last month after suffering depression.

The Fairfield-born keeper has reportedly been axed from his \$A113,315 a week contract at Chelsea and could well find himself at another club in the near future.

Bosnich has plans to launch a legal battle to clear his name of any wrong doing so expect to see this hit the headlines soon.

'Bozza's woes however seemed to have stumped to a new low with the latest being that he had tested positive for Cocaine.

Word on his future will be seen in the media soon.

-It was a heartbreak moment for Young Socceroo player Mark Tsiolras last week after the FC Utrecht striker withdrew from the U20 squad due to fitness problems.

One must ask what was Ange Postecoglou's thoughts were in selecting Tsiolras from the begin-

ning if fitness was one of his problems?

Taking his place was yet another Northern Spirit youngster in Adam Kwasnik who from all reports has slotted in nicely into the squad.

Spirit have had five players called upon for international duty, a marvelous achievement for the club and coach Lawrie McKinna.

Kwasnik, a former Parramatta Power player, has been classed as one of Australia's best talents and with this call-up could signal a European contract for the youngster.

-The Wollongong Wolves have apparently shown interest in former player Ben Blake now of the Perth Glory.

Blake has failed to start for the Glory this season and with young defender Mark Byrnes making the trek from Sydney to Perth in January, could find himself even more on the outer.

The center-half signed a short-term deal with the Glory but a renewed contract looks highly unlikely.

-Potential new National League club the Melbourne Dragons have reportedly approached several high-profile current and former NSL players for their squad if the Dragons gain entry towards the NSL next season.

The Chinese backed club will be gunning for an NSL spot one last time, otherwise the investors will look towards taking their business venture elsewhere to another sport.

-New Board for Soccer Canberra

At Soccer Canberra's AGM held last Monday night, member clubs elected a new Board of Directors.

Following the retirement of Steve Doszpot after a

seven year term as

President of Soccer Canberra, members elected Walter Valeri to a two year term as President.

Walter, a former Youth International player and Chairman of the Senior League Management Committee, is a very enthusiastic advocate

for soccer and will no doubt relish his position as Canberra's number one.

Walter's son Carl is currently one of the finest Aussie youngsters at U20 level and is currently starring for the Young Socceroos as well as Italian glamour side Inter Milan's Primavera side.

Having been able to grab eight points in their last four matches, it looks as though 'Kossie's boys have found their feel.

Northern Spirit will be the next team the Strikers face and at the rate Brisbane are going, the Sunshine Coast boys will certainly be no push over.

-Former Marconi Stallions junior Christian Vieri was a special guest at the club's last home match against rivals the Olympic Sharks last week.

The Italian international was brought to possibly give Marconi good luck however things did not

Round 16 Fixtures

3-1-03

Adelaide City Force v Marconi Stallions
Northern Spirit v Newcastle United
Wollongong Wolves v Brisbane Strikers

4-1-03

Perth Glory v Football Kingz

5-1-03

Sydney United v South Melbourne
Olympic Sharks v Parramatta Power
Bye - Melbourne Knights

work out for Blanco's boys as they suffered their eighth loss of the year.

Having been unable to score a single goal in their last five outings, there's no guesses as to what is currently lacking at the Fairfield-based side.

Maybe if Raul asks Vieri nicely to don the boots for one or two Marconi matches, the club will definitely know that there will be no goal shortage with this goal machine around.

-Power coach Nick Theodorakopoulos must be thanking his lucky stars that midfield star Brad Maloney has started in terrific form since his ankle injury that sidelined the former Glory player for quite some time missing the start of the NSL season.

Maloney was on song again last Sunday night scoring the only goal of the match to gift Parramatta the vital three points lifting the squad to seventh on the ladder.

The Power lads have certainly turned it around and with twelve matches still to play, Nick T's boys could be the surprise packet of the league come end of the NSL competition.

-Good news has hit former U20 international Dylan Macallister as the Northern Spirit striker is expected to be available for Lawrie McKinna's squad as of the first of January next month.

Dylan had his fair share of problems this year having signed two contracts, one for Swiss club FC Aarau and the other for the Spirit.

McKinna will now have more depth up front as Macallister is renowned for his deadly finishing especially in the air.

-Good to see a number of overseas based Australians back in the country for Christmas this year.

Sturm Graz's Eddie Bosnar, the Leeds United duo of Jaime McMaster & Shane Cansdell Sherrif, Everton's youth star David Carney and Southampton's Jay Lucas are just some of the many names that are currently enjoying their time off in Australia.

-The Brisbane Strikers have overwhelmed many National League observers with their recent run of great results.

Round 15

27-12

Wollongong Wolves v Marconi Stallions
Northern Spirit v Brisbane Strikers

29-12

Olympic Sharks v Melbourne Knights
Perth Glory v Parramatta Power
South Melbourne v Newcastle United
Sydney United v Football Kingz

Bye - Adelaide City Force

OFF THE CROSSBAR



By Allan Crisp

KOSMINAS RETURN TO THE KINGS

The Kosmina dynasty is vibrantly active and about to reinvent itself at the club where it all began a half a century ago.

Polish-born patriarch Alex Kosmina and his Australian wife Beverly saw the birth of the Polonia Adelaide Sports Club Inc in 1950 and their sons, John, Peter and Mark all played for the club.

Now their grandsons, Nathan, 19, and Justin 16 - who are the sons of former Australian international captain, John have rejoined the Croydon Park club.

Justin and Nathan started at the Croydon Kings as juniors, but because they lived at far away Hove, Nathan went to Adelaide Galaxy, while Justin played with South Adelaide. Currently the owner of a car and a licence, Nathan and his "bro" Justin, now have the means to travel for training and matches at Essex Crescent.

With the typical verve and determination of their grandfather and father, both teenagers are aiming to break into ranks beyond their years with Nathan looking to become a Kings first team regular, while

Justin has his sights set on the Under 23 side. Grandfather Alex played for the first Adelaide Polonia team in 1952 and later coached schools, juniors, junior colts and the Polonia reserve side. How good a coach was Alex Kosmina? The record book answers that question. In his only stint as senior coach in 1982, he took the club to second place on the SASF first division championship ladder.

He began his impressive managerial career in 1966 as secretary/manager of the Polonia Sports Club and was State team manager for SA U/14, U/16, and U18 squads before being appointed SA State senior team co-ordinator in 1984-85. During that period Alex was State senior team manager for the tour of India.

He was a member of the steering committee for the Philips Soccer League in 1976 and was a SASF board member from 1977-1981, in the capacity of first division representative and was chairman of the first division management committee.

He resumed as SASF board member in 1983, continuing for the next five years as the member of the North West Zone committee; secretary of the North West Zone and organiser of the North West Zone. Recognition of his achievements arrived in 1972 when Alex was accorded life membership of his beloved Polonia SC and in 1989 he was inducted as a life member of the SASF.

Those magnificent achievements were superseded by a fatherly act that unquestionably had an enormous affect on the career of his eldest son John.

Little Johnny, who kicked his first soccer ball in the back yard of the seaside suburb of Semaphore, one dark day committed the crime of taking his soccer ball to the Largs Bay Primary School.

The headmaster took a dim view of this

act and confiscated the ball, telling young John that the foreign game of soccer was not played at his school and never would be.

Not surprisingly, Alex was unimpressed by this turn of events, deciding to pay the head a visit.

No transcript exists of the ensuing behind closed door conversation that took place between headmaster and Kosmina senior, but the ball was returned to its rightful owner, who history has recorded, captained Australia for five seasons, played 102 games for the Socceroos and scored 43 goals. Other highlights of the John Kosmina profile reveal that he played for the Polonia U/15 side at age 9, before representing the SA U/14 and SA U/16 teams.

He played his first senior match for Polonia in 1973 as a midfielder against Cumberland United at Bailey Reserve.

John went on loan from Polonia to West Adelaide for the start of the NSL in 1977 when he netted the first goal of the competition in the seventh minute of the game against Canberra which West won 3-1.

He joined English club Arsenal in 1978 and during the off season played four guest games with Adelaide City.

He played his first game for Australia in 1976 against Bologna at Hindmarsh Stadium and made his swansong Socceroo appearance in 1988.

John coached Warringa Dolphins, Newcastle (NSL) and is the current mentor of the Brisbane Strikers.

Was the Channel 7-The Advertiser Sports Star of the Year in 1976, Player life member of the SASF a year later and was inducted into the Soccer Australia Hall of Fame (Hall of Champions) in 1999.

MELTA SURGES BACK

Former Adelaide City champion Sergio Melta is returning to the coaching ranks

as the new senior coach of State League club Cumberland United.

Melta, the holder of the NSL playing record of 445 games before being passed by ex-City team mate Alex Tobin, is charged



Sergio Melta: Adelaide City legend is the new coach of Cumberland United.

with the responsibility of boosting the Foxes back into the Premier League. Melta won the NSL Player of the Year award with Adelaide City in 1994 and was twice winner of The Advertiser Golden Boots award as the best Adelaide player in the NSL.

He was recognised by Soccer Australia in its inaugural Hall of Fame listing in 1999 by being included in the Award of Distinction for meritorious performance as a player.

The experience of being understudy to NSL boss Zoran Matic for two seasons has geared Melta towards greater coaching deeds.

"I want to go as high as I can as a coach,"

Melta said. "I've booked into two coaching courses in the UK in late September and it fits in well with the local schedule."

Melta is talking to a couple of recruiting targets, one of whom has NSL experience.

"Promotion is our aim and the lads are keen to get back to the Premier League because they are still licking their wounds after going so close last season."

PLAYFORD PLANS

Roy Richie is the new chairman of the Playford City (Patriots) Soccer Club, which has been restructured as an Association.

Previous chairman Rocco Varacalli remains as a club adviser, while Fiona Varacalli is the Promotions and Marketing person, with Kevin Winfield is the new treasurer. Ian Luker is in charge of the internal and external communications with Michael Oliver (juniors), Matthew Hayden (infrastructure) and Bill Henderson, Tony Innes and Rob Hart are the other committee people.

Under new coach David Miller, the Patriots will concentrate on local talent at both junior and senior level.

A progressive intention is to develop a close relationship with the 10 amateur league clubs in the Playford Council area, Gawler and the Barossa Valley.

"The idea is that we exist to complement, rather than to compete with each other," Luker said.

"The same applies to the Elizabeth and District JSA. As Playford is the only SASF club in the Council area, we would not be stepping on anyone's toes."

"I have met with Gawler and we have links with Elizabeth clubs, Grove, Vale and Downs, while Salisbury City is to play its home games at Ramsay Park."

ACADEMY PLAYERS OFF TO MANCHESTER UNITED

Two very talented and fortunate players from the Parramatta Eagles Soccer Academy based in Sydney are to leave for two weeks of intensive training and familiarisation at the famous Manchester United Football Club in England.

Parramatta Eagles are the official youth development partners of Manchester United in Oceania.

Under its agreement with Manchester United, selected Academy players travel to Manchester to train and play alongside United's own Academy and Apprenticeship players.

Oliver Bozanic and Sebastian Petralito, two extremely talented 13 year olds from the highly successful Parramatta Eagles Soccer Academy, will travel to Manchester in January.

Their training will take place at the state of the art Carrington Football complex on the outskirts of Manchester where both the Manchester United 1st team and its leading youth players ply their trade.

The opportunity to train at Carrington will be a tremen-

dous experience for these boys and they will be receiving very focused attention from the Manchester United Academy coaching staff to ensure their trip is a very rewarding one.



Oliver Bozanic, from the Central Coast of New South Wales, is a creative attacking midfielder with a superb first touch.

Sebastian Petralito, from Sydney, is a powerful and skilful striker with a very high goal-scoring rate.

The Parramatta Eagles Soccer Academy will also be sending its full under 17 squad to England during mid 2003.

This tour will incorporate training and matches organised in conjunction with Manchester United.

Two players will be invited to stay in Manchester at the end of the tour in order to train, full time, with the Manchester United professional players and coaching staff.

The Parramatta Eagles Soccer Academy continues to draw leading talent from around the state of New South Wales - from Coffs Harbour in the north to Wollongong in the south.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002-2003 NORTHERN DIVISION - ROUND 14

By Mark Stavroulakis

FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER 2002

Newcastle United Youth 1 Sydney United Youth 1
(Rufo 49') (Urizar 70')

SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER 2002

Canberra Deakin 2 Northern Spirit Youth 2
(Caldwell 37', Pideski 50') (Foti 14', Mailer 44')

QAS 3 Marconi Mustangs 1
(Smits 60' 73', De Silva 62') (Rossi 2')

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 2002

Parramatta Power Youth 1 Wollongong Wolves Youth 1
(R. Cardozo 35') (Werakso 87')

Marconi Stallions Youth 1 Olympic Sharks Youth 0
(Troposki 85')

BYE - ACTAS

BYE - AIS

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002-2003 NORTHERN DIVISION LEAGUE LADDER - ROUND 14

TEAM	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
Parramatta Power Youth	12	7	3	2	2	31	16	24
Canberra Deakin	13	6	3	2	4	35	20	21
AIS	10	6	3	3	1	16	7	21

Wollongong Wolves Youth	11	5	3	2	3	22	14	18
Newcastle United Youth	12	4	5	2	3	19	16	17
Sydney United Youth	11	5	1	2	5	26	17	16
Northern Spirit Youth	11	4	4	2	3	10	8	16
Olympic Sharks Youth	12	3	5	2	4	13	13	14
QAS	12	4	2	2	6	17	29	14
ACTAS	10	4	1	3	5	16	21	13
Marconi Stallions Youth	12	3	3	2	6	12	28	12
Marconi Mustangs	12	0	3	2	9	4	32	3

FRIDAY 27 DECEMBER 2002

ACTAS v Newcastle United Youth

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: Hawker Oval

Northern Spirit Youth v QAS

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: North Sydney Oval

Wollongong Wolves Youth v Marconi Stallions Youth

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: WIN Stadium

SURNAME	FIRST NAME	CLUB	GOALS
Spaleta	Michael	Canberra Deakin	12
De Silva	Timothy	QAS	7
Gavaghan	Peter	Parramatta Power Youth	7
Glavas	Luka	Sydney United Youth	7
Pideski	Carl	Canberra Deakin	7
Smits	Tim	QAS	7
Watkins	Daniel	Sydney United Youth	7

Interview with Home &



By Daniela Raco

Danny Raco joined *Home and Away* as Alex Poulos, a confident, smooth operator who thinks he is pretty cool. Danny is fast becoming one of Australia's most popular young actors. To his credit, he received a Logie nomination in 2001 for 'Most Popular New Male Talent'. Danny's first big break came on the drama series *Heartbreak High* (1998) where he played the role of Marco Vialli, a smooth Italian obsessed with style, and mad about soccer!!

Similar to his on-screen character, Danny is a soccer fanatic. He played soccer all throughout school, and still enjoys staying up till all hours watching live games. While there is little doubt about his passion for the round ball game, his commitment (or lack of) to improve his own game could do with a little TLC. When the ball doesn't land just in front of his feet, Danny doesn't feel the need to run after it! Fans of the game would have seen Danny featuring in a special celebrity match at this year's International Soccer Expo held in Sydney.

On my recent travels to the Harbour City I take to the shores of Summer Bay and visit Danny on the set of the popular drama series. Just as a matter of interest yes, Danny and I have the same surname...but we haven't quite figured out the family tree!

How long have you been acting?

Professionally since 1998. I was in *Heartbreak High*, and did the last series of that for 6 months. Unfortunately the show folded because of bureaucratic reasons. After that I went to University, which is what actors do - they tend to take up the academic option till something else comes up. A year later I joined that cast of *Home and Away*. I've been here two years now.

How far ahead are you in taping the show?

About six weeks. It always varies depending on holidays. For example we stopped going on air last week but we have kept on working to make up some time, then we are going to have one month break.

How long does it take to shoot one episode?

What you see in your lounge rooms at night is all shot in one day. We shoot half the scenes on location one week and then the next week we shoot all the scenes for the same episode in the studio. But it basically totals up to one episode per day.

Can you describe your on-screen character 'Alex Poulos'?

He has changed a lot since he first started. He arrived at Summer Bay as the stereotypical WOG. He was pretty much a sleaze bag. Whenever a girl walked past he tried his corny chat-up lines. Slowly I tried to give him a different edge and the script department worked with that as well. They tried to soften him up a bit, and transform him. I guess Summer Bay does that with each character that comes in. They start with an extreme so they've got somewhere to go. Now he's much more grounded. He has always been a sensitive kind of guy, but he would always try to hide that side. If anything, it's a positive attribute that people only realize later on in life. Alex is starting to mature through responsibility.



Danny Raco - A Lazio mad supporter

ties such as helping Leah, his sister, bring up her son, and the fact that his sister's husband went to jail so he has had to be the father-figure.

What is the most embarrassing thing that has happened to you on set?

I still haven't had a specific moment. But my friend Ryan, who played the character Vinnie who has now left the show, once had to come into the Diner with a stack full of plates. I must have dropped some lettuce on the floor and as he was running around the corner he slipped and like a cartoon on television his legs went up into the air. On the monitor all you saw was legs, shoes, and plates. Somehow he got up, and we were that close to start laughing but there was a mutual understanding to keep it going and use this take. Somehow we did with a stupid expression on our faces.

As far as I go, I've had no seriously embarrassing moments apart from perhaps once we had problems with one particular scene and on the 18th take it stuffed up and I thought it was my fault and started to scream 'alright, alright, I'm sorry, I'm sorry'. But then they said 'actually Dan we are going again because of Bo, not you'.

Was it surreal arriving for the first time on the set of Summer Bay?

Not really because I was lucky

enough to have had the *Heartbreak High* experience. People my age when they first start see it differently I guess, because it is their first experience. I had experienced the whole cameras and relationships between crew and cast before. It is still a very different ball game though from *Heartbreak High* where we shot on film, whereas here we shoot on video. We had much more time to shoot our episodes on *Heartbreak*, and we had extensive rehearsals. Here it is so fast. We don't have too much time to perfect a scene. We have to do that work at home. It tests the responsibility of the actor. We don't have much time to concentrate on the performance itself. If there is no major stuff up on camera

No. You've just brought back some bad memories. Without ever pressuring me, I think it was my Mum and Dad and their bloody music lessons. I have thought about a music career probably about as much as you have.

I love playing guitar, but I have pretty much taught myself.

I read that you enjoy getting creative in the kitchen. What gourmet cuisine's can you whip up in the kitchen?

Whatever the fridge has to offer. I love experimenting. I'm not as daring as my Dad. He is the type to combine eggplant, Nutella, Peanut Butter, and some Sherry and somehow it would taste beautiful (by the way I made that up, don't try and mix those things together)!!

I like pasta sauces. I don't do it too often, basically when I feel like it, or when I'm hungry.

What is it like playing a Greek character on *Home and Away* when you are Italian?

Very offensive. Very rude of them to suggest that to me in the first place. I'm still going through counselling! I'm a very proud Italian. I've got both Greek and Italian friends, and when they found out I was going to play a long-term Greek character you can imagine what I copped from my friends. I've learnt a lot about the Greek culture and traditions that I didn't know before. I've learnt how to Greek dance, and sometimes they give me, who's Italian, more Greek dialogue than Ada who is a dead-set Greek. But it's good, and challenging.

You were born in Rome and raised in Tuscany until you were 10 years old. What's the difference between a fanatical AFL supporter and a passionate soccer supporter in Italy?

As far as sporting fans in Australia, I think AFL fans are the closest we have to a hard-core soccer fan. I said close, but still nothing like you'll find in Italy. If you go to Italy and go to the Olympic Stadium in Rome and see a derby between Lazio and Roma with 80,000

screaming fans with scarves up, singing exactly the same song throughout the whole match. That's passion.

Rate your own soccer skills out of 10.

Skills 8/10, because it has nothing to do with fitness.

What is your most memorable soccer moment?

I used to live in a little village in Italy, and in Italy the general level of skill of a child is quite good because they are constantly kicking the ball around. Although we migrated to Australia, I tend to go back every two years.

One of the times that I went back, they must of thought that considering I had gone to Australia and because soccer isn't huge here that I would of lost all the skills and speed. Well, we went down to the park and started playing and I still had it.

This cross came over from the right and it was going quite a bit further than the actual goal, and I somehow went back in the air, bicycle kick, it's the sort of thing you dream about. It was the perfect connection and went right under the crossbar.

People in Italy still talk to me about this goal.

What makes soccer such a popular sport around the world?

It is no coincidence that it is known as the World Game. It's a very simple idea, and it doesn't take much to play it.

Unlike gridiron and ice hockey where you need proper equipment, all you need is a soccer ball and a couple of school bags and you've got a field.

It's a sport where you really do need to use your head. It's very tactical. If it's played properly it's a joy to watch. Some people think it's unwatchable, only because there may be only one goal in a game.

I find that absolutely absurd. If anything, that's the adrenaline and everybody is waiting for that one ball to finally be kicked in. There's just no comparison.

No one can tell me there is a better sport.

What will it take for Australia to be World Soccer Champions?

A lot of imagination at the moment! We have incredible players. But at the moment the really is, which also faces countries like South America, our stars are playing in different Leagues, even different Continents, and they obviously then have different styles of play.

When we unite our team and give then only a couple of weeks training before an important match, you can't expect that team to play united and know each others styles of play.

That's why sometimes teams whose players play in the same country tend to be more team-like and in touch with the strategy of their style of game.

Attendance will also bring more interest to the sport and bring more money to the sport. Hopefully in future we won't have to send all our best players overseas.

What league do you rate as the world's best?

To watch, I've just been able to admit this year that the English League is the most enjoyable in terms of their attacking style of football.

At the same time though, I think the Italian League has more technique.

What do you do in your 'down-time'?

If I do 'nothing' that's the ultimate. It's what I crave to do. I also love going out to restaurants, or the beach, listen to bands. I love acoustic, going to theatres, and I play guitar, trying to improve the cords!

Any early predictions for season 2002-2003?

In no particular order these teams will make the Top 6.

- Perth Glory
- South Melbourne
- Olympic Sharks
- Adelaide Force
- Newcastle
- Marconi



ABSW's Daniela Raco (Second from Left) shown with *Home & Away* star Danny Raco with Northern Spirit stars Lupce Acevski (Far Right) and John Hutchinson (Far Right).

Away Star Danny Raco



Ada Nicodemou: Plays Danny Raco's brother in Home & Away.

Who is the last person you would like to be stuck in an elevator with?

George Bush. The current

situation speaks for itself.

If you uncorked a genie in a bottle, what would you wish for?

A lamp which gives me unlimited wishes.

If you could travel back in time, where would you go?

At the peak of the Roman Empire, living in a pretty stable family. Easy Going. I don't want to be a peasant.

If you could choose any

actor to play you in a movie, who would it be?

Johnny Depp or Al Pacino as an older man. They could both be in the same movie. Going from young to old.

What is your favourite late night snack?

Cheese, crackers, and olives.

Complete this sentence 'Love is..

hard to find

Who would you trade places with for a day?

George Bush and I'd make all the right decisions so he then couldn't go back on his word.

What animal (or thing) best describes your personality?

A 'dice', because I'm always different, never down the line.

Best hangover cure?

Tiger Balm or water.

Favourite holiday destination?

French Polynesia.

Which famous person have you been told you look like?

Johnny Depp and Benjamin Bratt.

What is the best ingredient for a good night out?

Good company.

What is your biggest fear?

Not doing everything that I plan to do before it's too late. Not feeling fulfilled at the end of the day.

Do you have any bad habits?

My temper, but only with people that I know. And, I'm disorganized, but I'm working on it.

What ring tone do you have on your mobile?

The standard one can't stand the tunes.

What is the first thing you do when you arrive home?



Ada Nicodemou plays Danny Raco's sister in Home & Away. Check my emails.

If you could have box seats at any event in the world, what would it be?

The World Cup Final - Italy vs. Brazil.

How would you spend your last \$50?

Buy a book titled from 'Broke to Everything', or 'How to Recover from Complete Failure'.



ABSW's Daniela Raco posing with Danny outside the Channel 7 studios.

Kiwis warn Roos

All Whites skipper Chris Zoricich has warned Australia not to expect an easy path to the World Cup in 2006.

Speaking just days after FIFA announced Oceania will now have an automatic berth in the tournament in Germany, Zoricich told The Sunday Telegraph Frank Farina's Socceroos are far from certainties to claim that place.

"It will be to Australia's detriment if they take us lightly," Zoricich said.

"According to them the Socceroos think they're the only team in it. We've come to expect that and are happy to plod along and catch them on the day.

"Soccer in NZ has boomed in the past few years and following this announcement it's only going to get better.

"We've also got an experi-

enced team now with players in Europe and also several playing in the US. We don't go into any match against the Socceroos expecting to lose."

But while New Zealand is rated 49th in the world ahead of Australia at 50 following its Oceania Nations Cup success in July, Zoricich added the Socceroos will be deserving favourites if the likes of Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka are available.

"With Australia's overseas-based players back, the Socceroos have a right to be favourite," he said.

"We're well aware they didn't have their top side on the park last time - but we had a lot of guys missing, too.

"They had Kewell and Viduka and the rest of their stars back for the World Cup qualifying match-

es against Uruguay and didn't fire, so anything can happen."



Chris Zoricich: Kiwi skipper has warned Australia against complacency.

BYRNES READY FOR GLORY CHALLENGE

New Perth Glory signing Mark Byrnes knows he will find it difficult breaking into Mich D'Avray's first team.

Byrnes, 20, will officially sign with Glory next week after coming out of contract with the Olympic Sharks.

He told the West Australian, "It's

going to take a lot of hard work to get in the team but it's up to me now.

"It was a better career move to come here and to be involved in an intense atmosphere, concentrating 100 per cent on soccer.

"In the short term I want to be playing each week and playing well."



Mark Byrnes: Former Olympic Sharks defender is relishing the opportunity presented to him at the Glory.

PREMIERSHIP BIZARRO

Nige and Fergy here from BananaTV's Premiership Bizarro. Every week we're going to give you our views and opinions on what's going on, and off, in the English Premiership.

We've got sore guts. We've had a gutful of the continual rumour that Sven Gorrie Ericssonphone is quitting Ingerland's top job.

As usual, Gorrie is harping on about the constant press intrusion into his personal life.

Come on Svenn of course the British press will be all over you like a severe dose of the clap.

There's nothing they like more than not focussing on the footy and instead focussing on the man. Especially if the man seems to pay more attention to the contents of his trousers than the England team. Remember Sven, he who lives by the

sword, dies by the sword.

Just North of the border comes a blast from the past. Steve Archibaldy, ex Spurs, Barcelona and Airdrieonians.

Steve was recently set to be a one-man consortium to buy out the Scottish club with preferential treatment from management.

So what did Baldy do in return for this little favour?

Turned out he didn't have the cash in the first place and then did a runner to Spain to escape the clutches of the creditors.

Airdrieonians have consequently ceased to exist after trusting Steve and baldy is in the Costa Del Sol in Spain doing tough time on the beach and at the bar.

Strange goings on in Zimbabwe, where the football authorities, very bravely, have given the boot to Robert Mugabe's nephew, Leo who was the Chairman of the Zim

Banana TV



Premiership Bizarro

FA.

It seems like corruption and being a tosser run in the family. Leo was caught, stuffing \$US61,000 of the Zimbabwean FA's cash into his pocket.

See you next week. Nige and Fergy.

To catch Nige and Fergy on Premiership Bizarro, their internet TV show, go to www.bananatv.com

And click on Premiership Soccer. New episodes added each week. Don't miss it.





ENGLISH



Reigning Premiership champions Arsenal extended their lead to two points thanks to defender Sol Campbell's first-half goal and an injury-time strike by Robert Pires against Middlesbrough.

The former Spurs man produced a full length diving header from Pires' centre just before the interval to break the resolve of Boro. The goal made amends for Campbell's earlier miss from Thierry Henry's cross six yards out when he hit the post from a clear header.

Boro also lost Dutch midfielder George Boateng midway through the first half when he fell awkwardly following a challenge from compatriot Giovanni van Bronckhorst and was stretchered off.

Brazilian midfielder Gilberto Silva missed a header from four yards out midway through second half but the pressure was relieved on the home side when Luke Wilkshire was sent off for a second bookable offence after his foul on Pires. The French midfielder then wrapped up the victory late on.

Title challengers Chelsea moved into second place

with a 2-0 victory over Aston Villa at Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea, who left out influential Italian Gianfranco Zola, took the lead late on in the first half when Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink held up a through-ball for striker partner Eidur Gudjohnsen. And the Icelandic fired low past Peter Enckelman, who had earlier denied Hasselbaink from a free-kick. Then in the 57th minute Frank Lampard whipped in cross which evaded everyone in the centre and crept into the far corner of the net.

Newcastle moved ahead of Everton and Liverpool into fourth with a 2-0 win over Fulham on Tyneside, despite the rarity of an Alan Shearer missed penalty.

A back-pass resulted in the Fulham keeper being put under pressure by Alan Shearer. The Dutch keeper checked past the former England striker but then scuffed his left-footed clearance straight to Nolberto Solano who struck from 20 yards. Minutes into the second half Newcastle were awarded a dubious penalty following Sean Davis' tackle on Kieron Dyer but Shearer ballooned the spot-kick over the crossbar.

Pierre Wome was then sent off for a foul on Andy Griffin and Wales international Craig Bellamy netted

Newcastle's second midway through the second half, drilling home a left-footed shot.

At the other end of the table Sunderland displayed a new-found resilience under Howard Wilkinson as they fought back from 2-0 down at half-time to earn a draw with fellow strugglers West Brom at The Hawthorns.

Two goals in the first half, from Danny Dichio (27th minute) and Jason Koumas' free-kick (33) appeared to have put the home

side on course to rise out of the bottom three.

Kevyn Phillips ended his miserable scoring run this season when he latched onto a poor backpass by Sean Gregan in the 56th minute and beat goalkeeper Russell Hoult to roll in only his side's 11th goal of the season.

But the England striker then showed why he is so valued at the Stadium of Light as he made a goal out of nothing, cutting in from the left, beating a couple of defenders and driving into the corner of the net.

The bottom two sides West Ham and Bolton remain in the same positions after a 1-1 draw.

Makeshift striker Ian Pearce proved the difference at half-time, the central defender converting Jermain Defoe's knock-on in the 17th minute to drive low and hard under Jussi Jaaskelainen.

The Hammers were made to pay as in the 65th minute Nigerian international Jay Jay Okocha chested down a free-kick and picked out substitute Michael Ricketts who squeezed a shot past James for his first goal in open play since January. Leeds United's revival was dented by a freak equaliser from Southampton's Fabrice Fernandes at Elland Road.

They had appeared to be heading to their second successive victory after four straight defeats when Harry Kewell put them ahead 16 minutes from time.

He reacted first to Jonathan Woodgate's header from a corner which rebounded off a post, the Australian hammering home the opener. But with a minute remaining Fernandes stepped up to a 40-yard free-kick, launched it into the penalty area and saw it miss everyone and creep in at Paul Robinson's far post.

Birmingham's disciplinary woes continued in their 1-1 draw with Charlton as they had striker Geoff Horsfield sent off for a raised challenge on Luke Young in the 54th minute which resulted in a melee of players.

Claus Jensen had given the Addicks' a half-time lead, coolly beating Nico Vaesen from close range, but after Horsfield was dismissed Blues hit back as Jensen appeared to pull back Aliou Cisse and Paul Devlin converted the 67th-minute penalty.

Garry Flitcroft netted the only goal of the game as Blackburn beat Manchester United 1-0 to end the Red Devils' run of eight successive victories.

The title-chasing visitors had the better of the possession in the first half but failed to find the net, with Ruud van Nistelrooy and Diego Forlan missing chances to break the deadlock.

Then five minutes before the break Flitcroft lashed home from close range after Martin Taylor had headed Damien Duff's free-kick back into the danger zone.

Meanwhile the Merseyside derby between Liverpool and Everton ended 0-0 at Anfield.

In a game of few chances, substitute Wayne Rooney came closest to breaking the deadlock, only to see Stephane Henchoz block his effort onto the crossbar with Liverpool goalkeeper Chris Kirkland beaten.

There was drama as the game came to a close however, with Steven Gerrard going unpunished despite lunging in with a two-footed tackle on Everton left-back Gary Naysmith.

Arsenal 2 - 0 Middlesbrough, Birmingham C. 1 - 1 Charlton Athletic, Chelsea 2 - 0 Aston Villa, Leeds U. 1 - 1 Southampton, Newcastle U. 2 - 0 Fulham, West Bromwich A. 2 - 2 Sunderland, West Ham U. 1 - 1 Bolton W., Blackburn R. 1 - 0 Manchester U., Liverpool 0 - 0 Everton.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Arsenal	19	12	3	4	39	20	39
2 Chelsea	19	10	7	2	34	15	37
3 Man. United	19	10	5	4	30	18	35
4 Everton	19	10	3	6	22	21	33
5 Liverpool	19	9	5	5	28	19	32
6 Newcastle	18	10	2	6	29	24	32
7 Southampton	19	7	7	5	22	19	28
8 Tottenham	18	8	4	6	24	24	28
9 Blackburn	19	7	6	6	25	22	27
10 Middlesbrough	19	7	5	7	22	18	26
11 Charlton	19	7	4	8	21	23	25
12 Man. City	18	7	3	8	22	25	24
13 Birmingham	19	6	6	7	18	22	24
14 Fulham	19	6	4	9	22	25/22	
15 Villa	19	6	4	9	17	20	22
16 Leeds	19	6	3	10	24	26	21
17 Sunderland	19	4	6	9	12	26	18
18 West Brom	19	4	4	11	15	29	16
19 Bolton	18	3	6	9	19	32	15
20 West Ham	19	3	5	11	18	35	14



Blackburn Rovers's Garry Flitcroft is congratulated after his goal against Manchester United.

ITALIAN SERIE A

AC Milan look set to top Serie A heading into the winter break despite dropping their first home points of the season in a goalless draw against Brescia at the San Siro on Sunday.

Milan came into the game a point clear at the summit having won all seven of their league matches at home, conceding just one goal in the process.

Carlo Ancelotti's defence continued to play their part with another clean sheet but the Rossoneri's star-studded attack could only fire blanks.

Brescia will be delighted with the point having started the day only two places above the bottom four.

Lazio missed their chance to go top as they threw away the lead at home to Bologna in a 1-1 draw at the Stadio Olimpico.

With Milan's draw, the Romans had the chance to take control at the top of the table, but they could not better their title rivals' result.

Claudio Lopez fired them into the lead right before half-time, but Cristian Zaccardo grabbed a 65th-minute equaliser for in-form Bologna.

The visitors finished the match with 10 men after Carlo Nervo was sent off in the 90th minute for his second bookable offence.

Mauro Camoranesi snatched a late winner as Juventus beat Perugia 1-0 to maintain the pressure on the top three.

Camoranesi struck in the last minute and the result compresses the top of the table, with Juve and Chievo, who also won today, in fifth and fourth respectively just three points behind leaders Inter.

The result is also a Christmas boost for Juventus, who lost 2-0 to Lazio last week and needed a win on Sunday to restore confidence for what is heating up into a tighter than usual title race.

There was no pitch invasion but Como's 2-0 defeat at Chievo on Sunday could prove just as dam-

aging to the struggling side's prospects of extending their stay in the top flight beyond one season.

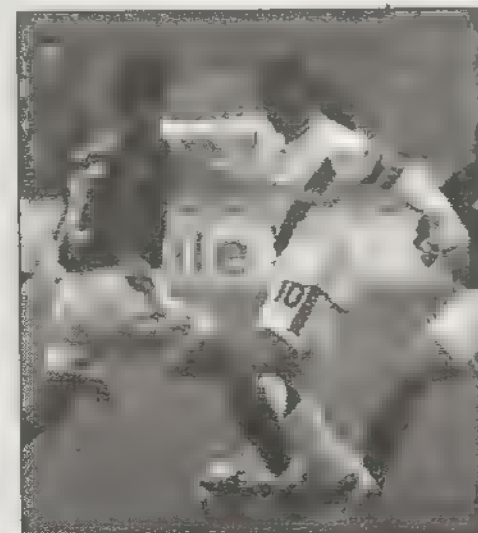
Second-half goals from Sergio Pellissier and Nicola Legrottaglie ensured Chievo stayed in the hunt for Champions League places.

But Como, who were handed a four-match stadium ban after their supporters forced Wednesday's match against Udinese to be abandoned, will go into the winter break still without a win.

Empoli sprung a Christmas surprise on Atalanta as they came from 2-0 down to grab a draw so late it was almost a New Year effort.

After falling behind to first-half goals, Empoli came back into the game when Gaetano Grieco struck in the 86th minute and Francesco Tavano grabbed the equaliser two minutes from full-time.

It was harsh on Atalanta after Cristiano Doni had



Brescia's Roberto Baggio takes on the Milan

opened the scoring in the 13th minute before Damiano Zenoni made it 2-0 just after the half hour.

A second-half fightback helped Reggina claim only their second Serie A victory of the season with a 3-1 success at the expense of fellow strugglers Piacenza.

The visitors started the game well and took the lead after just 12 minutes through Nicola Boselli.

But Reggina, who were rooted in the bottom three with only seven points from their previous 14 league games, hit back after the break to claim all three points.

Gianluca Savoldi got them back on track with an equaliser three minutes after the restart before the same player put the hosts ahead after 62 minutes.

David Di Michele then sealed the victory with a penalty 15 minutes from the end. Reggina remain in the relegation zone despite the win but they are now just two points behind 14th-placed Piacenza and safety.

On Saturday Torino slumped to their 11th defeat of the season on as they went down 1-0 at home to Roma.

Having suffered the most defeats of any club so far this season, the odds were stacked against the home side but veteran Italian coach Renzo Ulivieri demanded before the match total commitment.

Ulivieri has been able to inspire many a player in the past to greater heights but it was not to be against the Romans.

Walter Samuel's goal two minutes after the break proved to be enough for the visitors who take maximum reward from the game.

Roma, however, are still nine points behind leaders AC Milan, who host Brescia on Sunday.

In Saturday's only other Serie A game a pair of floodlight failures threatened to spoil Udinese's night but the visitors prevailed over 90-interrupted minutes at Modena.

The match was supposed to kick off at 5pm local time but some of the lights did not switch on, causing a 15-minute delay.

Once the match was finally underway, Giampiero Pinzi scored what would prove to be the only goal in the 24th minute.

Five minutes into the second half the lights went out, forcing the teams to retreat to the dressing rooms.

The match resumed after another 15-minute delay and Udinese, who were awarded a 2-0 triumph over Como yesterday following their controversial mid-week encounter, held on for maximum points.

Modena 0 - 1 Udinese, Torino 0 - 1 AS Roma, AC Milan 0 - 0 Brescia, Atalanta 2 - 2 Empoli, Chievo 2 - 0 Como, Lazio 1 - 1 Bologna, Perugia 0 - 1 Juventus, Reggina 3 - 1 Piacenza, Parma 1 - 2 Inter Milan.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AC Milan	15	10	3	2	30	10	33
Inter Milan	15	10	3	2	31	16	33
Lazio	15	9	5	1	31	15	32
Chievo	15	9	2	4	26	13	29
Juventus	15	8	5	2	23	12	29
Bologna	15	7	6	2	19	11	27
Udinese	15	7	4	4	15	14	25
Roma	15	6	5	4	27	22	23
Parma	15	6	4	5	26	18	22
Empoli	15	6	3	6	23	21	21
Modena	15	6	1	8	12	22	19
Perugia	15	5	3	7	18	23	18
Brescia	15	4	4	7	19	26	16
Piacenza	15	3	3	9	12	23	12
Reggina	15	2	4	9	13	27	10
Atalanta	14	2	3	9	13	26	9
Torino	14	2	1	11	7	28	7
Como	15	0	5	10	8	26	5

WORLD

SPAIN

Primera Liga

Atletico Madrid 1 - 2 Racing Santander, Athletic Bilbao 2 - 0 Deportivo Alaves, Malaga 2 - 3 Real Madrid, Celta de Vigo 3 - 1 Villarreal, Rayo Vallecano 0 - 1 Sevilla, Mallorca 0 - 4 Barcelona, Espanyol 1 - 0 Valladolid, Real Betis 2 - 1 Osasuna, Recreativo Huelva 1 - 3 Real Sociedad, Valencia 0 - 1 Deportivo La Coruna.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Sociedad	15	10	5	0	29	16	35
Valencia	15	8	4	3	24	8	28
Real Madrid	14	7	6	1	29	15	27
Celta Vigo	15	8	3	4	20	13	27
Real Betis	15	7	5	3	26	16	26
D Coruna	15	7	5	3	20	17	26
Mallorca	15	7	2	6	21	26	23
Atletico Madrid	15	5	6	4	20	17	21
Racing Santander	15	6	2	7	17	16	20
Barcelona	15	5	4	6	22	19	19
Malaga	15	4	6	5	20	22	18
Osasuna	15	5	3	7	17	21	18
Athletic Bilbao	15	5	3	7	21	28	18
Sevilla	14	4	5	5	12	11	17
Valladolid	15	5	2	8	13	18	17
CD Alaves	15	4	4	7	17	25	16
Villarreal	15	3	6	6	14	18	15
Rayo Vallecano	15	4	3	8	16	23	15
Espanyol	15	4	1	10	15	26	13
Recreativo Huelva	15	2	3	10	13	31	9

GERMANY

Bundesliga

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	17	12	3	2	36	14	39
Borussia Dortmund	17	9	6	2	28	13	33
Werder Bremen	17	10	3	4	34	27	33
Schalke	17	7	7	3	21	14	28
VfB Stuttgart	17	7	6	4	27	22	27
1860 Munich	17	7	4	6	25	24	25
Hamburg	17	7	4	6	21	23	25
VfL Bochum	17	6	5	6	31	28	23
Hertha Berlin	17	6	5	6	19	19	23
Wolfsburg	17	7	2	8	20	22	23
Arminia Bielefeld	17	6	4	7	21	24	22
Nurnberg	17	6	3	8	23	27	21
Hansa Rostock	17	5	5	7	20	20	20
Bayer Leverkusen	17	5	5	7	24	27	20
Borussia M'gladbach	17	5	4	8	20	19	19
Hannover 96	17	4	4	9	22	33	16
FC Kaiserslautern	17	3	4	10	17	28	13
Cottbus	17	2	4	11	13	38	10

HOLLAND

Dutch Eredivisie

FC Twente Enschede 3 - 0 RBC Roosendaal, Roda Kerkrade 1 - 0 FC Utrecht, De Graafschap 3 - 2 FC Zwolle, PSV Eindhoven 1 - 0 Vitesse Arnhem, Willem II Tilburg 1 - 0 FC Groningen, NEC Nijmegen 0 - 0 RKC Waalwijk, Excelsior Rotterdam 0 - 2 Ajax Amsterdam, NAC Breda 1 - 1 Feyenoord Rotterdam.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	17	13	3	1	42	10	42
Ajax	17	12	4	1	44	18	40
Feyenoord	17	10	3	4	40	20	33
NAC	16	6	8	2	22	12	26
Roda JC	17	7	5	5	30	25	26
Willem II	17	7	4	6	26	23	25
RKC	17	7	4	6	18	23	25
FC Utrecht	17	6	6	5	23	21	24
NEC	17	6	5	6	22	26	23
FC Twente	17	5	7	5	21	24	22
Heerenveen	17	5	5	7	24	29	20
AZ	16	6	2	8	27	40	20
Excelsior	17	4	6	7	20	29	18
Vitesse	17	4	4	9	17	20	16
RBC	17	4	4	9	20	29	16
FC Groningen	17	3	4	10	16	28	13
FC Zwolle	17	3	4	10	16	30	13
De Graafschap	17	3	4	10	18	39	

GREECE

Ethniki Katigoria

Proodeftiki 3 - 1 Aris Salonik, AEK Athens 3 - 0 Ionikos Nikea, Giannina 0 - 0 OFI Crete, Egaleo Athens 0 - 2 Olympiakos Piraeus, PAOK Saloniki 4 - 0 Panahaiki Patras, Xanthi Skoda 1 - 0 Iraklis Saloniki, Akrotitos 0 - 3 Panionios, Panathinaikos 1 - 0 Kallithea.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Olympiakos	12	7	5	0	28	4	26
2 PAOK	12	7	3	2	30	16	24
3 Panathinaikos	12	7	2	3	13	8	23
4 AEK	12	6	3	3	19	12	21
5 Aris	12	6	3	3	15	12	21
6 Proodeftiki	12	5	5	2	15	10	20
7 Xanthi	12	4	7	1	15	6	19
8 Panionios	12	5	3	4	13	10	18
9 Iraklis	12	5	3	4	13	11	18
10 Egaleo	12	2	7	3	9	13	13
11 OFI	12	2	6	4	11	13	12
12 Kallithea	12	2	5	5	10	14	11
13 Ionikos	12	2	4	6	6	20	10
14 Giannina	12	1	5	6	10	16	8
15 Akrotitos	12	2	2	8	9	25	8
16 Panahaiki	12	1	1	10	4	30	4

SCOTLAND

Premier League

Aberdeen 0 - 0 Livingston, Celtic 2 - 0 FC Dundee, Dundee United 0 - 3 Hearts, Kilmarnock 2 - 1 Hibernian, Postp. Motherwell ? - ? Dunfermline, Partick Thistle 1 - 2 Rangers.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Rangers	21	18	3	0	64	16	57
2 Celtic	21	17	2	2	57	13	53
3 Hearts	21	9	6	6	32	32	33
4 Dunfermline	20	10	3	7	37	38	33
5 Hibernian	21	9	2	10	29	31	29
6 Kilmarnock	21	8	5	8	22	33	29
7 Dundee	21	6	7	8	25	32	25
8 Partick	21	5	6	10	22	34	21
9 Aberdeen	21	4	8	9	18	34	20
10 Livingston	21	4	5	12	27	34	17
11 Dundee United	21	3	6	12	18	41	15
12 Motherwell	20	3	5	12	25	38	14

FRANCE

Ligue 1

Paris S.G. 1 - 1 Bordeaux, Sochaux 3 - 0 Lens, Bastia 3 - 1 Nantes, Guingamp 3 - 1 Ajaccio, Lille 1 - 0 Le Havre, Marseille 1 - 1 Monaco, Postp. Montpellier ? - ? Auxerre, Sedan 1 - 1 Lyon, Strasbourg 0 - 0 Nice, Troyes 0 - 1 Rennes.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Marseille	20	10	5	5	21	19	35
2 Nice	20	9	7	4	24	14	34
3 Guingamp	20	10	4	6	31	24	34
4 Monaco	20	9	6	5	32	20	33
5 Lyon	20	9	6	5	36	25	33
6 Sochaux	20	9	6	5	23	14	33
7 Auxerre	19	9	5	5	22	18	32
8 PSG	20	7	7	6	29	21	28
9 Nantes	20	8	4	8	23	24	28
10 Lens	20	7	7	6	18	19	28
11 Lille	20	7	7	6	20	24	28
12 Bordeaux	20	7	6	7	23	19	27
13 Strasbourg	20	7	6	7	23	30	27
14 Bastia	20	7	3	10	21	28	24
15 Rennes	20	6	5	9	19	22	23
16 Sedan	20	6	5	9	23	28	23
17 Le Havre	20	4	7	9	14	24	19
18 Ajaccio	20	4	6	10	16	27	18
19 Troyes	20	3	7	10	14	22	16
20 Montpellier	19	3	7	9	16	26	16



SOCCER NSW



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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON 2002/2003

MATCH OF THE ROUND

 Belconnen Blue Devils	2
 Blacktown City Demons	2

By Graham Cooke

first-half domination.

Blacktown coach Brian Brown said it was as if a light had gone out, and there are probably fewer more accurate descriptions of the way his team allowed this game to slip away after 40 minutes of near total

An ominous silence hung over the usually rowdy home crowd as the Devils stuttered and stumbled their way towards half time – the fact the fans were back in full voice less than 30 minutes later was due to one of the more remarkable soccer revivals seen in this city.

Belconnen have yet to record a win

against their rivals in NSW Premier League competition, and that record seemed in no danger as Blacktown got down to some solid business.

Apart from an early hiccup when Dane Hokin headed past his own goalkeeper only to see the ball bounce back off the base of the upright, the action was all in the home side's half of the field, underlined in the 17th minute when Luke Roodenburg collected a pass on the edge of the area, and had time to control and steady himself before cracking a shot past Anthony Giannasca.

He was the finisher for his side's sec-

ond 20 minutes later – the end result of a piece of dreadful defending in which an exposed Giannasca had previously made two reaction saves in quick succession with his team mates seemingly incapable of clearing the ball.

Then, just as it seemed as if the Devils could look forward to nothing more than a night of humiliation, fortunes changed, and the man who played a major role in the transformation was midfielder Michael Katz.

He got things going with a fine run that drew the Blacktown defence, slipping a pass to Danny Macor whose telling shot at last gave the McKellar Sports Centre crowd something to cheer about.

With two minutes to go Dion Valle brought down Macor in the area. The usually prolific striker took his own spot kick, but in a flash of defiance goalkeeper John Crawley guessed the direction and made a fine one-handed save.

Even so, the initiative had gone from Blacktown, and Andy Rakic's introduction to the game in the second half, brought much-needed creativity to the Devils midfield to complement Katz's thrust and pace. With 59 minutes gone Valerio Galeotti, celebrating his first start

for the club, penetrated the right flank and set up Katz for the equaliser.

After that it was simply a case of whether Blacktown could hang on for something out of the game. In the end they did, although Katz was virtually doing as he liked in the middle of the field, first setting up Macor for a shot which Crawley did well to save, then seeing the goalkeeper in action again, turning his own fierce drive away for a use-less corner.

Brown said that before the game he would have been happy with an away draw. "But when I saw how completely we dominated the first 40 minutes I feel disappointed and frustrated," he said. "All credit to Belconnen, but the only positive thing that can be said about the second half is that we survived."

Belconnen team boss Lino Fiorese described the early period as the longest warm-up in the club's history. "We just wanted around for things to happen and they happened to us," he said.

"We changed things at half time to take advantage of the fact we had some momentum going and in the end we were unfortunate not to take all three points."



Valerio Galeotti celebrated his debut for the Blue Devils in fine form.
(Photo courtesy of Belconnen Blue Devils)

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS2

(Danny Macor 41', Michael Katz 59')

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS2

(Luke Roodenburg 17', 37')

at McKellar Soccer Centre, McKellar

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: 1 Anthony Giannasca, 2 Adrian Downing, 3 Matthew Cachia (18 Andy Rakic 46), 4 Lee Pietrukowski, 5 Jaime Mauro (9 Clinton Larfield 72), 7 Michael Katz, 8 Elliot Zwangobani, 10 Danny Macor, 12 Valerio Galeotti, 14 Marko Pernovic (15 Matthew Valeri 78), 17 Stephen Kemp.
Coach: Lino Fiorese.

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: 1 John Cawley, 4 Luke Roodenburg, 6 David Reid (14 Luciano Berbis 81), 7 Simon Cantazaro, 8 Dion Valle, 9 Kain Rastall, 10 Naoki Imaya, 11 Jim Nikas, 12 Dane Hokin, 13 Steve Riches (24 Bishara Stephan 74), 15 Patrick Gatt.
Coach: Brian Brown

Referee: Bill Simpson

Assistant Referees: Tom Ear, Ned Sparkes.

Fourth Official: Michele Trebar

Yellow Card: Belconnen Blue Devils Clinton Larfield 80th

Crowd: 389.

SOCCER NSW

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SOCCER NSW

Penrith Panthers

3

Rockdale City Suns

3

By Paul Goodwin

An explosive and exciting encounter at Andrews Road ended in high drama as locals, the Penrith Panthers, snatched a sensational 3-3 draw against Rockdale, deep into stoppage time, having been down 3-1 with just 20 minutes to go.

Two goals in the game stood out as contentious.

If each of those merely cancelled one another out, then the result would still have been an action-packed draw, but it was the last gasp goal from Rod Hutchinson that drew the biggest reaction.

A hostile visiting crowd was far from pleased that Hutchinson had been able to win a physical challenge on the Rockdale keeper and force the ball over the line, following a free kick from deep on the right, pumped into a packed penalty area by Luke O'Connell.

Rockdale was guilty of some pretty poor

lapses of concentration during a game that they dominated only in patches.

Inspired by Denis Alilovic, a commanding presence in the middle of the park, they soon had Penrith a goal down in the 16th minute.

Alilovic and Rob Todorovski combined on the left, the ball went over to Peter Apolevski on the right and his shot was only parried, leaving Todorovski with the loose ball to bundle over the line.

Ten minutes later it was all square as Hutchinson was allowed to waltz down the left byline and cut the ball back, for an unmarked Danny Hinton to tap home.

Rockdale regained the lead in the 37th, Alilovic again the provider, this time for veteran Spase Najdoski, whose finish was of his usual high standard.

There were chances galore at both ends throughout the game, but Rockdale's Peter Trajceviski was the busier of the two keepers and made many fine, if unspectacular saves.

Rockdale was able to extend its lead in

the 69th after Todorovski had robbed Penrith of possession and then laid on a clear path to goal for Najdoski.

Tackled firmly in the box by Danny Wells, the striker came down and referee Craig Pearce pointed instantly to the spot. The decision raised a few eyebrows in both camps.

Najdoski, himself, converted easily.

Once again, however, Rockdale went to sleep and Penrith was able to pull one back inside a minute.

A counter attack on the left saw substitute Osvaldo El Ali's effort beaten away, only for O'Connell, following up, to slam the loose ball into the net. Penrith then threw everyone forward, desperately, for the last 20 minutes and somehow fashioned an equaliser.

A controversial one, at that, as Rockdale players made claims for handball, while many in the crowd felt the keeper could have been impeded.

All that counted was that the goal stood and Rockdale had been denied points in stoppage time, for the third time in five

weeks. For Penrith, it was their first point in three.

Penrith almost snatched an unlikely winner when the in-form El Ali swept over a superb, low cross for Hutchinson at the far post, but the blond striker could only find the side netting.



An unorthodox save from Penrith's Chad Taylor.

PENRITH PANTHERS 3

(D Hinton 25', L O'Connell 76';

R Hutchinson 95')

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 3

(R Todorovski 15', S Najdoski 36/68' pen)

at Andrews Road Field, Penrith

PENRITH PANTHERS: 1 Chad Taylor, 5 Ben Wright (25 Marty McCaffery 10), 7 David Gardiner (20 Osvaldo El Ali 69), 6 Daniel Wells, 17 Daniel McCann, 21 Luke Boyd, 10 Shane Hammond, 11 Luke O'Connell, 13 Jason Sciberras, 19 Danny Hinton, 9 Rod Hutchinson

Subs not used: 24 Kurt Van Arkes RGK, 27 Garrett Dowling Coach: Tony Rasmussen

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS: 1 Peter Trajceviski, 3 Ghenadie Costiuc, 17 Tony Ju, 5 Richard Plesa, 6 David Brickell, 14 Malcolm Bideau

(11 Sash Tirovski 78), 7 Peter Apolevski, 8 Ben Deighan, 9 Spase Najdoski (16 Trent Worrall 76), 10 Denis Alilovic, 13 Robert Todorovski (12 Anthony Adamo 88),

Subs not used: Philip Zabals (RGK)

Coach: Mike Todorovski

Referee: Craig Pearce

Assistant Referees: Ernie Horvath and Paul Muckias

Fourth Official: Michael Johnson

Yellow Cards: Penrith Panthers: Danny Hinton 27, David Gardiner 50, Marty McCaffery 64, Luke Boyd 77, Rockdale City Suns: Ben Deighan 10, Malcolm Bideau 50, Peter Apolevski 45

Bankstown City Lions

1

C'bury-M'ville Olympic

2

By Greg Stock

Canterbury-Marrickville continued their rise up the Premier League table, accounting for a disappointing Bankstown City 2-1 at Jensen Park.

Desperate to turn around a couple of ordinary performances, Lions coach Lee Sterrey risked the underdone Raphael Bove and Todd McManus to start the match, both players struggling through the match in the blustery conditions.

Quite simply, the Canterbury midfield burned Bankstown with Paul Bourke, George Norah and Con Paradisis running themselves to a standstill in a bid to give their side the advantage.

Down 1-0 to a 5th minute Robbie Gomez goal, the Berries stormed back in the 31st minute. Against the run of play, Alan Picken

cut through the Lions defence and stepped inside Richard Lukic on the edge of the penalty box, trying his right foot shot with his first time effort.

Up until then, Bankstown had the better of the game and looked capable of building on their first goal if it wasn't for the heroics of goalkeeper Ivan Necevski, who kept his side in touch.

Four minutes after the break enigmatic striker Andy Amegashie beat the offside trap and the advancing Brad Swancott, to chip the goalkeeper from just outside the edge of the area to give his side the lead, and all of a sudden the momentum was with the Berries.

Striker Colin Luff returned to form with a strong game, testing Necevski with a couple of late efforts as well as hitting the bar and causing no end of trouble. His battle with Connack Begley was a highlight.

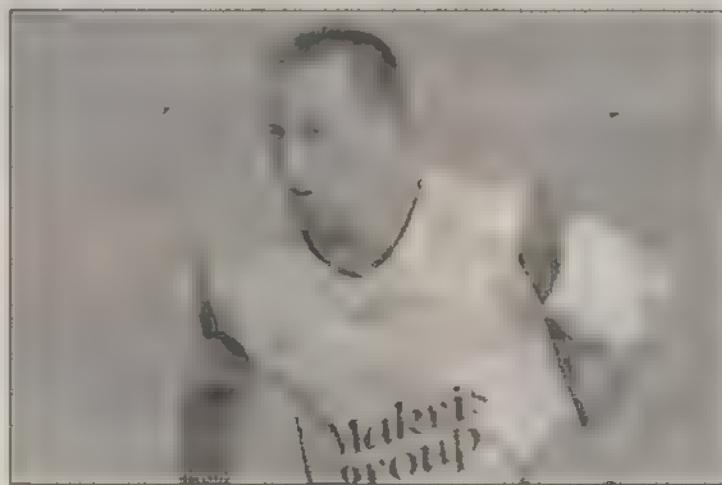
The defender forced to bring Luff down in

the 41st minute when he looked set to break through. Tamey the home side could do little with the free kick but send it harmlessly over the bar.

Still struggling to come to grips with his sides long injury toll, the pressure is building coach Lee Sterrey to start producing some

results. Robbie Gomez was lively on occasions while Glenn Moore did well, but sadly they had too few friends.

For the second week running, Canterbury midfielder Paul Bourke led the charge for the visitors and was well supported by his midfield comrades.



Alan Picken equalised for the Berries in the 31st minute.

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS . . 1

(R Gomez 5')

C'BURY-M'VILLE OLYMPIC . . 2

(A Picken 31', A Amegashie 49')

at Jensen Park, Sefton

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Bradley Swancott, Todd McManus, Richard Lukic, Raphael Bove (Robert Issa), Norman Tome, Glenn Moore, Colin Luff, Robbie Gomez, Alex Trpkoski, Damien Lukic, Daki Falcon, Coach: Lee Sterrey

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE OLYMPIC: Ivan Necevski, Sasa Ilijasenovic, Connack Begley, Paul Bourke, Con Paradisis, Alan Picken, George Norah, Ben Price, Andy Amegashie, Leigh Gunn, Michael O'Riley, John Kyriazopoulos, Coach: Greg Woodhouse

Referee: Greg Leverton

Assistant Referees: Jim Nicolaou and Les Ren 40

Fourth Official: A Stibinger

Yellow Card: Connack Begley 41 (CMO)

Fairfield Bulls

1

Central Coast Coasties

4

By Paul Goodwin

Coasties ventured to Nineveh Field with a feeling of apprehension, knowing that all eyes would be upon them following their outstanding start to the season.

They also knew that three of last year's first grade players had moved across to the Bulls and were keen to give them a very warm welcome. The outcome of the game was that the Coasties supplied the heat and the Bulls were worn to a frazzle.

The Coasties mounted an all-out assault on the Bulls' goal, for fifteen minutes Fairfield was under siege and only for some good luck and brave work by Adam Snyder and Arthur Diles, the hosts would have been a couple of goals down.

The Bulls gradually regained their composure and made a couple of attacks of their own, but the deadly duo of Mark Hoenselaars and Matthew Borg were being well held by the Coasties' defence well marshalled by Chris Fleming and David Brewer.

Borg got away from the defenders at last, rounded Fleming and goalie Ben Kerr and saw his shot hit the post with an open goal. The ball was then cleared down the other end in an instant, Tom Quilty latched onto it and passed to James Monie, who in turn crossed into the penalty area where Aron Binskin completed a great move with a fine headed goal.

Nine minutes later the position was reversed, Quilty again picked up a loose ball, crossed to Monie in the Bulls' penalty area and was immediately set upon by two defenders.

A quick exchange of passes saw Monie leaving those same defenders for dead and a bullet-like shot then left Darren Moore in the Fairfield goal wondering what had happened. It was now 2-0.

Half time could not come quickly enough for the Bulls. After the break, Fairfield, who had obviously been read the riot act by coach Craig Sharpley, appeared to be a little sharper and began to show more enthusiasm. Van Bentum, who had been their best in the first half, began to get Borg and Hoenselaars moving, but the young Coasties' defenders obviously had not heard of their reputations and con-

tinued to close them down.

Twenty minutes into the second half, Quilty again picked up a loose ball and ran at the Bulls' defence. Goalkeeper Moore came out and parried Quilty's shot along the goal line. Quilty was onto the ball instantly and again ran at goal, this time beating a defender and shooting straight at Moore with the ball deflecting into the net. With all the effort that Quilty had put

in, it was no more than he deserved.

Four minutes later Fleming had two attempts at putting the ball into the Bulls' penalty area only to see both attempts cleared away. The ball again came back to him and this time he found Monie and the score was now 4-0.

To their credit Fairfield kept trying, and a lapse of concentration by the Coasties' defence allowed Borg in at last and he headed home a well-taken goal from a cross from Snyder in the 74th.

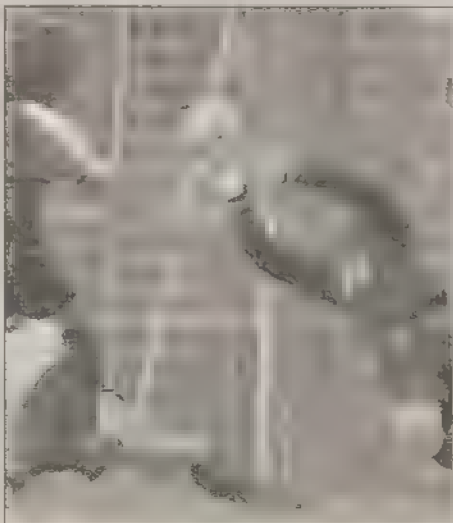
The game ended with the Coasties worthy winners, though and shock leaders of the competition, albeit on goal difference from A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt, the only other unbeaten side in the competition after five rounds.

Bulls coach, Craig Sharpley was very direct after the match.

"They played us off the park and we failed to turn up" But naturally, Coasties' John McLafferty was a little happier in his own comments.

"At the risk of repeating myself, we again showed that enthusiasm and dedication can outshine experience."

"To go into the Xmas break as competition leaders is overwhelming but we won't be letting it go to our heads."



Goal to James Monie of the Coasties.

FAIRFIELD BULLS 1

(M Borg 74')

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES . . 4

(A Binskin 29', J Monie 38/71', T Quilty 67')

at Nineveh Field, Edensor Park

FAIRFIELD BULLS: 1 Darren Moore, 12 Ismael Arrarte (16 Mitch Daley), 14 Sefer Yildiz, 5 Arthur Diles, 7 Adam Snyder, 4 Jason Connolly, 8 Stewart Van Bentum, 13 Adam Peaty (21 Luke Tomich), 11 Robert Angievski, 9 Marc Hoenselaars (Sam Zargon), 10 Matthew Borg

Subs not used: 20 Ali Akba (RGK)

Coach: Craig Sharpley

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES: 20 Ben Kerr, 3 David Brewer, 19 Sean Matthews (C), 4 Mitchell Cook, 6 Aron Binskin, 14 Chris Fleming, 5 Liam Cameron, 11 Tom Quilty (8 Daniel Surridge), 17 Pat Bradley

13 James Monie (18 Nathan Byrne), 2 Josh Maguire (15 Christian Shepherd)

Sub not used: 1 Andrew Goodman (RGK)

16 Matt Mitchell, Coach: John McLafferty

Referee: Peter Vrkvoski

Assistant Referees: Gerard Parsons and David Bradshaw

Fourth Official: Keith Anderson

Red Card: Mitchell Cook

Yellow Cards: Fairfield: Marc Hoenselaars, Centra Coast: Mitch Cook

SOCCER NSW

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers

Parramatta Eagles

1
1

By Paul Goodwin

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers and Parramatta Eagles made light of the blustery conditions to turn on an excellent spectacle at Lambert Park on Sunday.

An enterprising Parramatta looked very sharp from the kick off and was soon in front, albeit in freakish circumstances.

A fierce shot from Anthony Mitiga, one that could well have gone yards wide of the target, struck Apia defender Andrew Clark, 30 yards out, completely wrong-footing keeper Bob Catlin.

Parramatta had the ascendancy for the next half hour.

Ben Delicata set off on a run from inside his own penalty area, in the 18th minute and advanced down the right, into the opposition area, before drawing Catlin well off his line.

It looked as if the delicate chip then produced would increase the lead for the visitors, but Clark was able to race back in time and clear to safety.

After that initial period of Parramatta superiority it was Apia's turn to take over.

Jason Holmes became the hero of the day for the visitors with a string of impressive saves.

In the 40th Marcus Stergiopoulos lobbed the ball forward for Zlatko Arambasic whose nod on for Steve Karavatakis led to a firm shot and a great save at point-blank range by the in-form Holmes.

Then, three minutes later, Apia was able to draw level.

Stergiopoulos, again, was the provider with a fine searching pass to Joe Moric out wide.

Moric whipped the ball in and a pack of players converged on the ball, with Sam La Rocca being able to finally score after first hitting the post and then seeing his other shots twice rebound off defenders' legs on the goal-line.

La Rocca persisted and finally managed to force the ball over the line.

The early part of the second half saw a few shots going wide for Parramatta, but almost all the action was at the other end, where Holmes again saved some near certain goals from Arambasic and was also relieved to see

Karavatakis miss from close range on at least four occasions or dwell too long on the ball and allow the keeper to gain the upper hand.

It was an attacking game throughout and neither side looked like wanting to close it up,

though the A.P.I.A. defence looked the more likely to succumb to a swift counter attack.

On the day it was a point well earned by Parramatta and two dropped by A.P.I.A., who played plenty of good football without reward.



Ben Delicata was unlucky not to score for the Eagles.

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS 1
(S La Rocca 43')
PARRAMATTA EAGLES1
(T Mitiga 7')
at Lambert Park, (Marion St),
Leichhardt

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS: 1 Bob Catlin, 19 Andrew Clark, 16 Tony Tesoro, 17 Paul Dee, 3 Josip Moric, 5 Marcus Stergiopoulos (C), 18 Ante Moge (5 Michael Galluzzo 85), 12 Jeremy Brown (14 John Paul Boutros 68), 7 Sam La Rocca, 9 Zlatko Arambasic, 10 Steve Karavatakis.

Subs not used: 20 Murray Nelson (RGK), 11 Ryan Jones.

Coach: Les De Ceus.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: 1 Jason Holmes (C), 2 Michael Kladis, 3 Geoff Dwyer, 5 Mark Reveley, 4 Marcom Medak, 18 Paul O'Grady, 7 Mauricio Dias (12 Tim Geddis 85), Anthony Mitiga, Matt O'Shea, Ben Delicata, Danie Kucicka (17 Adam Anderson 70).

Sub not used: Liam Curran (RGK), 6 Danie Borg, 13 John Kesso.

Coach: John Caeja.

Referee: Mark Hester.

Assistant Referees: Jim Barnes and David Dewhurst.

Fourth Official: Adrian Tampin.

Yellow Cards: A.P.A. Leichhardt, Tony Tesoro 88, Parramatta Eagles, Marcom Medak 22.

St George Saints

Bonnyrigg White Eagles

2
0

By Greg Stock

St George coach Manny Spanoudakis picked himself up an early Christmas present with three competition points, following his sides shock 2-0 victory over Bonnyrigg.

Last week Spanoudakis was in the dog house, sent from the field for an alleged verbal indiscretion, but this week he was on top of the world, plotting the downfall of one of the competitions prized sculps. Given that the win came without Con Anastasiadis, Orhan Dincer and Bruno Beddoni, it was a fantastic result and one which is certain to lift the clubs flagging spirits.

In the windy conditions, both sides had plenty of chances, the Saints more composed front of the sticks the major difference. The two goals they scored came within two minutes of each other and busted the game wide open at a time when Bonnyrigg were starting to look the

letter side. The first goal from Ali Chahine came twelve minutes into the second half when he turned his first time strike from a short cross at the near post. Archie Markopoulos had started the move from his own side of halfway, before George Maglis streamed forward to provide Nick Bohanus with the opportunity to cut a cross back from the by-line.

Two minutes later, stopper Luke McDougall, on one of his rare forays forward, got in behind the White Eagles defence and sent a cross from the left hand touchline to the back post where midfielder Evangelos Petratos was on hand to slot the ball home.

With the wind playing havoc, the goalkeeping performances of Fernando Greco and Michael Xuereb deserve special mention. Bonnyrigg hit the post three times in the first half with Xuereb denying them many times more in a free flowing match.

Greco also had a strong match snuffing out two one-on-one chances in the first half, despite

the two goal margin. Best for the home side were Ali Chahine and Achilles Markopoulos

who looks to be over the worst of a hamstring problem.



Evangelos Petratos sealed the result for the Saints.

ST GEORGE SAINTS2
(A Chahine 57', E Petratos 59')
BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES0
at St George Stadium, Rockdale

ST GEORGE: Michael Xuereb, Sebastian Sinozic, Evangelos Petratos, Jose Mendes, George Maglis, Jason Lal, Achilles Markopoulos (Bradley Campbell 87'), Simon Verrander, Ali Salim (Nick Bollandis 46'), Luke McDougall, Ali Chahine (Bruno Beddoni 81').

Coach: Manny Spanoudakis.

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: Fernando Greco, Mark D'Allesandro, Tayfun Devrimol, Bobby Dragas, Javier Mancino (Joe Brown 56'), David Harding (Alex Asanovic 60'), Shane Knight (Kindness Agwu Asan Ogyu), Fernando Peagino, Devrim Huseyin (Maden Simonovic 88').

Coach: Lyube Jancev.

Referee: Kevin Humphries.

Assistant Referees: David Finlay and Heidi Breeze.

Fourth Official: Terry Goodhue.

FROM THE SIDELINES By Greg Stock

*The turnaround in the on field fortunes of Rockdale City Suns has seen them rise from second last to top five material in a matter of weeks.

The return to form might have something to do with Director of Coaching Bill Pilovski becoming a little more involved in the teams day to day running and working in with first grade boss Mile Todorovski in a co-coaching role.

"Two heads are better than one" said Pilovski. "At Super League level we did exceptionally well, but now we have gone up to the Premier League we feel it's better for us as a club to have the two of us working side by side. So far it's been terrific and I just wanted to point out that Mile is definitely still the coach, it's just that I will be supporting him through the remainder of the season."

*The Coasties are certainly going great guns at present, and will have the experienced legs of Peter Shirley Preston back, the first week after Christmas. Preston resumed full training last week with coach John McLafferty still undecided as to how the fit the former Gold Medal winner back into his side.

*Our hearty congratulations to Penrith Panthers Assistant Coach and part-time striker Osvaldo El Ali, who recently celebrated his 40th birthday. El Ali was given an early mark from training last week to celebrate the event with some close family, and came home to find a 'surprise party' in full swing.

A number of his former team mates from his lengthy state league and NSL career had flown in from all parts of the country to help him celebrate. Well done Ossie and we'll look forward to seeing a few more goals before you finally hang up the boots.

*Bonnyrigg White Eagles fans should keep an eye out for a mystery triallist seen at training in recent weeks at The Serbian Centre. No name as yet but the player is of Serbian origin and according to our spies quite a player.

*St George will shortly be saying goodbye to their talented defender Sebastian Sinozic. The former youth international will be flying to the United States to link up with the Los Angeles Galaxy for the pre season training schedule.

*Bankstown City coach Lee Sterrey is still looking to have his best squad back on the park sometime early in the new year. Midfielder Elias Augerinos is making steady progress, while Ralph Bove, Glenn Moore, George Issa and Todd McManus are all carrying niggling problems that will benefit from a couple of weeks rest. Keep an eye out for the high flying Lions in the second half of the season.

*Those Eagles fans calling for a return to the playing arena for Assistant Coach John McKie will

be disappointed to know he intends to remain retired. With the side going through a tough time of things in front of goals, the former striker could have been the answer to the sides ills. "He's enjoying life on this side of the fence too much to consider a comeback," laughed Coach John Calleja. "But seriously, he has been working hard with our forwards the past few weeks, passing on some of his old tricks in the hope we can turn it all around."

*Interesting to see St George coach Manny Spanoudakis favour Michael Xuereb for the starting spot against Bonnyrigg this week over regular Con Anastasiadis. We are told that the move was a one off with Con answering the challenge in fine style, pulling off some fine saves in a man of the match performance in the Under 19s.

*From the Sidelines would like to pass on our best wishes to all our readers for the festive season. We hope that Santa is good to each and every one of you and we Look Forward to seeing you all at a game soon.



SOCCER NSW



ROUND 5 RESULTS

FIRST GRADE

Belconnen Blue Devils2 (D Macor 46', M Katz 59')	Penrith Panthers3 (D Hinton 25', L O'Connell 70', R Hutchinson 95')	Bankstown City Lions1 (R Gomez 5')
Blacktown City Demons2 (L Roodenburg 14/37')	Rockdale City Suns3 (R Todorovski 15m, S Najdoski 36/68m Penalty)	C'bury-M'ville Olympic2 (A Picken 29', A Amegashie 49')
Fairfield Bulls1 (M Borg 74')	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers1 (S La Rocca 43')	St George Saints2 (A Chahine 57m, E Petratos 59m)
Central Coast Coasties4 (A Binskin 29', J Monie 38/71', T Quilty 67')	Parramatta Eagles1 (T Mitnga 7')	Bonnyrigg White Eagles0

UNDER 19

Belconnen Blue Devils1 (R McCormick 33')	Penrith Panthers0	Bankstown City Lions2 (R Reyes 31/65')
Blacktown City Demons1 (own goal 25')	Rockdale City Suns1 (B Mate 41')	C'bury-M'ville Olympic2 (J Tsuronis 46', W Hijazi 61')
Fairfield Bulls0	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers1 (R Youns 28')	St George Saints0
Central Coast Coasties0	Parramatta Eagles2 (M Cassis 10', N Rivera 85')	Bonnyrigg White Eagles0

FIRST GRADE

UNDER 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Central Coast Coasties	5	3	2	0	8	2	11	Blacktown City Demons	5	4	1	0	21	4	13
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	5	3	2	0	9	4	11	A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	5	4	0	1	11	5	12
Blacktown City Demons	5	2	2	1	7	6	8	Parramatta Eagles	5	3	2	0	12	5	11
C'bury-M'ville Olympic	5	2	2	1	6	5	8	Rockdale City Suns	5	3	1	1	10	7	10
Rockdale City Suns	5	2	1	2	9	8	7	Belconnen Blue Devils	5	2	2	1	9	7	8
Belconnen Blue Devils	5	1	3	1	5	5	6	C'bury-M'ville Olympic	5	2	1	2	14	10	7
Parramatta Eagles	5	1	3	1	3	3	6	Penrith Panthers	5	2	1	2	8	6	7
St George Saints	5	2	0	3	6	7	6	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	5	1	1	3	5	9	4
Penrith Panthers	5	1	2	2	7	7	5	St George Saints	5	1	1	3	4	8	4
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	5	1	1	3	5	8	4	Bankstown City Lions	5	0	3	2	6	15	3
Bankstown City Lions	5	1	1	3	4	8	4	Central Coast Coasties	5	0	2	3	4	14	2
Fairfield Bulls	5	1	1	3	6	12	4	Fairfield Bulls	5	0	1	4	2	16	1

NEXT ROUND

ROUND 6

FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Central Coast Coasties	v Belconnen Blue Devils	Sat 4 Jan	7.00pm	Pluin Park
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	v Bankstown City Lions	Sat 4 Jan	7.00pm	Serbian Centre
Blacktown City Demons	v A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Sat 4 Jan	7.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Rockdale City Suns	v Fairfield Bulls	Sat 4 Jan	7.00pm	John Crehan Park
C'bury-M'ville Olympic	v Penrith Panthers	Sun 5 Jan	6.00pm	Henson Park
Parramatta Eagles	v St George Saints	Sun 5 Jan	6.00pm	Melita Stadium

UNDER 19

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Central Coast Coasties	v Belconnen Blue Devils	Sat 4 Jan	7.00pm	Pluin Park
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	v Bankstown City Lions	Sat 4 Jan	7.00pm	Serbian Centre
Blacktown City Demons	v A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Sat 4 Jan	7.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Rockdale City Suns	v Fairfield Bulls	Sat 4 Jan	7.00pm	John Crehan Park
C'bury-M'ville Olympic	v Penrith Panthers	Sun 5 Jan	6.00pm	Henson Park
Parramatta Eagles	v St George Saints	Sun 5 Jan	6.00pm	Melita Stadium

TOP GOALSCORERS

- 4 — Luke Roodenburg (Blacktown City),
Spase Najdoski (Rockdale City Suns)
- 3 — Zlatko Arambasic (APIA-Leichhardt),
Rod Hutchinson (Penrith Panthers),
James Monie (Central Coast),
- 2 — Paul Bourke (Canterbury-Marrickville),
Steve Karavatakis (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt),
Shane Knight (Bonnyrigg White Eagles),
Ante Moric (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt),
Marko Perinovic (Belconnen Blue Devils),
Alan Picken (Canterbury-Marrickville),
Robert Todorovski (Rockdale City Suns)

For all the latest news, results and information check out www.nswpremierleague.com

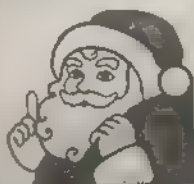
SOCCER NSW

WHAT EACH CLUB WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS

A fantastic start to the season has seen A.P.I.A. rise quickly to the top of the pile and make a significant impact on the competition thus far.

One present I am sure coach Les De Celis would relish is the return of Ivan Zelic. The former youth international has been in Asia trialling and a game from the stylish defender would be a plus.



BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS

Poor old Lee Sterrey has had more ups and downs than a fiddlers elbow in the opening few weeks of season. Given the long injury list at Jensen Park an African witch doctor wouldn't go astray, one to help his guys recover quickly and to ward off any evil spirits that might affect his side over the next few months.



BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS

After a solid start to the season, there is only thing coach Lino Fiorese would like. Some fitness for out of sorts playmaker Ivo De Jesus who continues to struggle in his bid to make the Blue Devils first eleven.



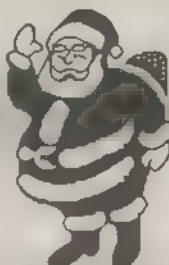
BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS

The Demons have continued where they left off last season, rising swiftly to the top of the Premier League table. With the leg injury to defender Damien Foxe, I am sure coach Brian Brown would appreciate a new right knee for 'Foxey' and some improved fitness for the returning Paul Yates.



BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES

Another mixed start to the year has seen the pressure on coach Ljube Jancev to repeat the feats of previous seasons. In the absence of last season's Golden Boot winner Jimmy Aschner, a high quality striker in the Aschner vein would be a well-received gift.



CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE OLYMPIC



Coach Greg Woodhouse has got this side pointed in the right direction, and all he needs off Santa is some consistency and a quick fix for injured defender Tom Maric. If Santa would be so kind to deliver on both wishes then the Berries would be genuine top five candidates.



CENTRAL COAST COASTIES

With such a young side Coasties mentor John McLafferty is asking Santa to help look after his side during the festive season and have them back all fit and ready to go for the resumption of the season. Another three points might also be handy to keep them above the dogfight for a top five position.



FAIRFIELD BULLS

The main difference between the Bulls being top five contenders and also-rans has a lot to do with a young experienced defence. Jason Connolly and Sefer Yildiz need a couple of capable friends, so Santa is being asked for a couple of new experienced fullbacks to help fill a few leaky holes in the Bulls back four.



PARRAMATTA EAGLES

Eagles coach John Calleja isn't getting too greedy.

A new hamstring for striker Timmy Gledhill would be a start and a set of new boots for his other strikers. Ones which actually assist the player in finding the net wouldn't go astray!



PENRITH PANTHERS

If Santa is feeling in a benevolent mood can he please assist the Panthers in finding a replacement for outgoing midfielder Peter Bennett. Somebody who is creative, yet experienced I am sure is not too much to ask. Someone to help the boys get around the park and win the close matches.



ROCKDALE CITY SUNS

Co-coaches Billy Pilovski and Mile Todorovski have turned the Suns ship around and the way they are going a top five finish is not out of the question. A ground back in their heartland of Rockdale would be appropriate given the fanatical support this club enjoys at home either that or an express train to Cringila every second weekend from Rockdale Station.



ST GEORGE SAINTS

After an inconsistent start to the year, coach Manny Spanoudakis is dead keen to have his side pick up some points after a couple of ordinary outings. If Santa could deliver him six points, a new groin for the injured Bruno Beddoni and a few more games from outgoing defender Sebastian Sinozic I'm sure the Saints would be well pleased.





SOCCER NSW



GIRLS ON THE BALL

The Soccer NSW girls program, "Why should the Boys have all the fun?", is proving very popular in the primary and high schools throughout the state with over 25 schools already booked in for early 2003.

Going from strength to strength, the program this year has involved over 5,000 girls through a combination of school visits, gala days and football festivals across the Sydney Metropolitan, lower Blue Mountains and the Central Coast.

Our School of the term is 'Our Lady of Lebanon' Harris Park.

Here is what some of the girls had to say.

"Having a State Player visit our school was fantastic - we had so much fun!"

"Jo (Jo Boyd - Women's Super League Goalkeeper) taught us how to dribble, pass and score goals. Soccer is great!"

"The Showbags were cool!"

"We played a mini world cup and our team (Argentina) were undefeated. England were our toughest opposition."

No matter how big or how small your school is, why not have us come and visit.

To book a school visit with one of our experienced coaches contact Soccer NSW on 9629 1800 or 9629 2833.

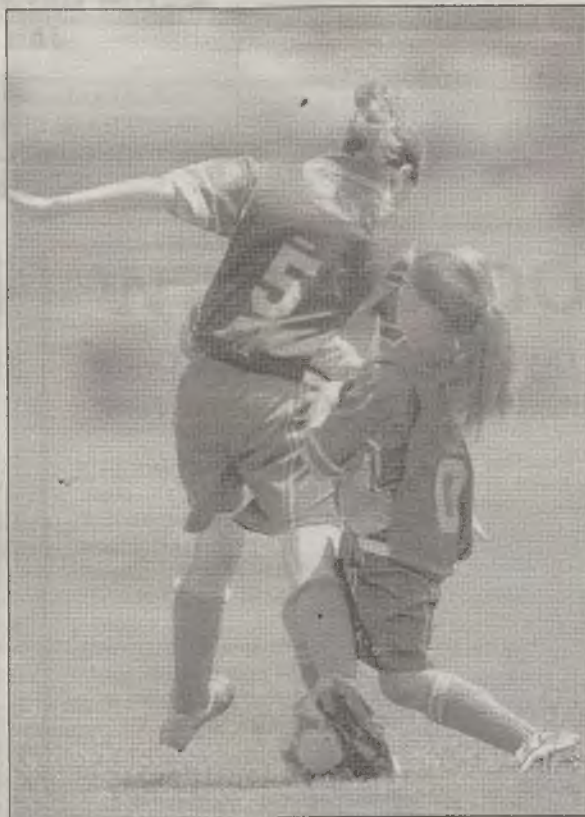
You can also find out more by visiting our website, www.soccernsw.com.au, follow the links to the Council of Associations and head to the Women's Department.

Your local competitions kick-off early in the new year, so get in touch with your local soccer club to get involved in the World Game.



Our Lady of Lebanon

GIRLS IN THE ZONE



Action from the girls inter zone games held at Valentine Sports Park.



SOCCER NSW



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1st ANNUAL SYDNEY TOURNAMENT FOR U-17s

Everything is in readiness for the inaugural Under 17 Sydney Tournament to begin on Saturday the 11th of January, 2003 at Valentine Sports Park, Glenwood. In this first year of competition, the following 8 teams from around NSW will participate in this event:

New South Wales Institute of Sport
St George Soccer Association
Nepean Association
Hajduk Wanderers
Westfield Sports High
Macleay Valley Rangers
Parramatta City
Bonnyrigg White Eagles

Newly elected Soccer NSW President, Tom A. Doumanis will officially open the tournament preceeding the first fixture along with other members of the Soccer NSW board.

Tournament Director, John Hedison believes that this will be the first of many Sydney Tournaments held at Valentine Sports Park.

"This Tournament will fill a niche for our elite youth players to get experience at a different level prior to the commencement of the Youth League season. If we can add an international flavour to that experience, it can only allow our local players to improve."

"Although we at first had expressions of interest from the Fijian and Malaysian National Teams, it's important that we make the first tournament a success and plan for expansion in the following years. In fact, planning on the 2004 Tournament has already begun with teams in Thailand and China already in discussions for 2004" concluded Mr Hedison.

The majority of fixtures will be played in the evening to avoid the hot Sydney summer weather, with all teams guaranteed of a minimum of 5 games.

To see some hot youth football, make sure you get down to Valentine Sports Park from the 11th to the 18th of January, 2003.

GROUP A

NSW INSTITUTE OF SPORT
ST GEORGE Soccer Association
NEPEAN Association
HAJDUK Wanderers

GROUP B

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH
MACLEAY VALLEY RANGERS
PARRAMATTA CITY
BONNYRIGG White Eagles

MATCH DAY 1 SATURDAY JAN 11

1. NSWIS v ST GEORGE 6.00 pm
2. PARRA. CITY v BONNYRIGG 6.00 pm
3. NEPEAN v HAJDUK 7.45 pm
4. WSHS v NORTH COAST 7.45 pm

MATCH DAY 2 SUNDAY JAN 12

5. NORTH COAST v BONNYRIGG 6.00 pm
6. ST GEORGE v HAJDUK 6.00 pm
7. NSWIS v NEPEAN 7.45 pm
8. WSHS v PARRA. CITY 7.45 pm

MATCH DAY3 TUESDAY 8 JAN 14

9. ST GEORGE v NEPEAN 6.00 pm
10. NSWIS v HAJDUK 6.00 pm
11. NORTH COAST v PARRA. CITY 7.45pm
12. WSHS v BONNYRIGG 7.45 pm

PLATE SEMI-FINALS THURSDAY JAN 16

13. 3rd/A v 4th/B 5.30 pm
14. 3rd/B v 4th/A 7.30 pm =

CUP SEMI-FINALS THURSDAY JAN 16

15. 1st/B v 2nd/A 5.30 pm
16. 1st/A v 2nd/B 7.30 pm

FINALS DAY

SATURDAY JAN 18 PLATE 3rd/4th PLAY-OFF

17. LOSER 13 v LOSER 14 3.00 pm
- PLATE FINAL
18. WINNER 13 v WINNER 14 5.00 pm
- CUP 3rd/4th PLAY-OFF
19. LOSER 15 v LOSER 16 5.00 pm

CUP FINAL

20. WINNER 15 v WINNER 16 7.00 pm

PRESENTATION CEREMONY After Cup Final

SOCCER NSW

Junior Licence / Level 1 Coaching Course "WHY SHOULD THE BOYS HAVE ALL THE FUN?"

When: Saturday 15th & Sunday the 16th of February 2003
What Time: 9.00am-5.00pm (both days)
Where: Valentine Sports park, Glenwood, NSW
Who: Any Women or Girls with an interest in Soccer (must be over 15 years)
How Much: \$98.00 (including GST)



For more information or an application form, contact Tricia at Soccer NSW by email (tricia@soccernsw.com.au) or phone (02) 9629 1800

For more information about Coaching accreditation courses, check out our website.
www.soccernsw.com.au

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POSITION VACANT



STATE COACHING POSITIONS

Soccer NSW is seeking expressions of interest for the following NSW State Team Coaching positions within the Elite Development Program.

- Under 14 Boys
- Under 14 Girls
- Under 16 Girls
- Under 18 Girls

Essential Criteria:

- Minimum qualification of Senior Licence (ACC approved accreditation)
 - Experience working with elite youth soccer players
 - Sound knowledge of Soccer NSW Youth League structure and competition
 - Experience planning and implementing coaching programs at an elite level
 - Good communication and management skills
 - To be eligible for the U14 Boys position, coaches must be currently involved in the Elite Soccer Player (ESP) Program
- Soccer NSW is an equal opportunity employer and all applicants must complete a prohibited employment declaration.

Please forward your application by Friday the 17th January, 2003 marked Private & Confidential to:

Linda Christie
Human Resources Manager
Soccer NSW

Post - PO Box 6146, Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153
Fax - 02 9629 3770
Email - linda@soccernsw.com.au

For more information phone 02 9629 1800 or email
info@soccernsw.com.au

Soccer - The World Game



SOCCER NSW



A PATH LESS TRAVELLED

Most people believe that the to the professional playing ranks is to get spotted in your teens, sign as an apprentice with a local or overseas club before being offered a million dollar deal to play in the English Premier League, Serie A or Prima Liga. Unfortunately those fairy tale stories are only reserved for the likes of Harry Kewell, Mark Viduka and Brett Emerton.

One twenty year old from Doonside is taking a path less travelled by other footballers in the hope of becoming a professional player. Attacking midfielder Troy Mc Coll has recently returned to Australia from the United States for a well earned holiday after a successful season of Soccer and study at North Country Community College, Saranac Lake.

Saranac Lake, you may ask, is a small ski town located in the Adirondack Mountains in New York State about a 2 hour drive from the Canadian border. So you can understand why he is enjoying an Aussie Summer for a change from the freezing conditions on campus.

Ironically this Aussie lad was recently named in the National Junior College Athletics Association (NJCAA) All American First Team, was named the New York State Regional III Player of the Year as well as being selected in the All Tournament Regional XI. Part of these accolades may be due to the fact that of the 15 goals that he scored this season, 9 were from freekicks!

But how does someone from the western suburbs find himself in the US college system kicking goals (pardon the pun). Well, Troy began his football career as a 4 year old with the Doonside Hawks in the Blacktown District Soccer Football Association (BDSFA), then at age 11 he began representing his local association and was also selected in to be a part of the Westfields Sports High Soccer Academy under the tutelage of current NSWIS head coach, Kelly Cross and later Trevor Morgan with players such as Heather Garriock (Matildas), Shane Candsell-Sheriff and Jamie McMaster (Leeds United). As a 16 year old he switched to the N e p e a n Association, before moving to Bonnyrigg White Eagles in the Under 17's and 18's and finally ended up at Hadjuk Wanderers in the Under 21's in season 2001.

Troy's big break came as a result of the Kelly Cross suggesting his name to North Country Coach, Larry McFadden who requested McColl's football resume. Being a Coerver instructor since he was 15, Troy also had the opportunity to travel to Lake Placid for a Coerver Coaching camp and was able to display his wares to McFadden during the evening scratch matches amongst the coaching staff.



Troy McColl's future is looking up in the US College system.

Not exactly a conventional trial, but good enough for McColl to get McFadden's nod and a soccer scholarship. As a result, Troy is currently studying towards an Associate Diploma in Recreation Management with a view to obtaining a Sports Management degree in the future.

When asked about what it's like to be the only Aussie in a small town in the North East United States, Troy's answer was straight to the point.

"Yeah I cop a bit of flack with the usual Crocodile Hunter, Crocodile Dundee, 'Through another Shrimp on the Barbie' comments coming my way quite often, but I give is good as I get with the old drop bear and kangaroos in George Street and stories easily fooling naive Americans."

Asked to comment on the standard of soccer that he has experienced, it is the coaching that immediatly springs to mind.

"The coaches I have had are really open and friendly. They tend to talk to you a lot and provid alot of encourage-

ment. Mr Mc Fadden is also open to ideas and encourages us all to think differently about our own games. But the other thing about playing in the NJCAA is that the standard is quite varied. One week you can beat a team 6 or 7 nil, but the next week you can go down 4 or 5 nil yourself."

But with the world at his feet, where does Troy head now?

"Well, to have these results in my first (freshman) year is a pretty good achievement. At the moment, there's a couple of National College Athletics Association (NCAA) teams starting to show a bit of interest in me. That's the highest level in the States, so hopefully I'll weigh up my options in late February and make a decision for the upcoming season. In the long-term, I do hope to play professionally, maybe in Switzerland where I have a few contacts, but the most important thing for me at the moment is to make sure that I get a degree behind me that I can fall back on when I need to."

Any final words for the young aspiring professional footballers out there?

"Yes, if you want want to make it to the top of the game, there are many different paths you can take. The best thing about the US college pathway is that not only do you play a high level of football, but you are also studying towards a diploma or degree that will help you long after your playing days are done."

With an attitude like that, Troy is sure to head onwards and upwards.

The Soccer NSW offices will be closed from Tuesday the 24th of December and will re-open on Thursday the 2nd of January 2003.



From everyone at Soccer NSW
have a safe and
enjoyable holiday season.



OFC Under 20 Qualifier Australia v Fiji



OFC Under 20 Qualifier Australia v Fiji

OFC Under 20 Qualifier Australia v Fiji

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